

# Necklaces of Gems

(Qalā'id al-Jawāhir)

A BIOGRAPHY OF THE CROWN OF THE SAINTS  
SHAIKH 'ABD AL-QĀDIR AL-JĪLĀNĪ



SHAIKH MUHAMMAD IBN YAHYĀ AT-TĀDIFĪ

TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC BY MUHTAR HOLLAND

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*"And hold fast all together to the rope of Allāh" Qur'ān (3:103)*

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## Publisher's Preface

Once in a great while there will come to prominence, in the affairs of mankind, someone for whom superlatives fail. The mind becomes weary, attempting to find fitting epithets to convey an inkling of the stature of such paragons of excellence. In the history of the Saints [*awliya*'] of Islām, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī stands out as being unique, in the broad scope of perfection that includes his lineage, his complete development, piety, knowledge of the religion and adherence to the Sacred Law [*Sharī'a*], his intimate and direct knowledge of the Divine, and his establishment by the Lord of all the Worlds at the level of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*].

It has been said that in Islām there are four levels, or stages, of the religion; the *Sharī'a*, the *Ṭarīqa*, the *Ḥaqīqa* and the *Ma'rifa*. The *Sharī'a* [Sacred Law] is the outer aspect of the religion and has been well covered in many other writings, as has the *Ṭarīqa* [Path], which is the mystical dimension of the religion, and provides a framework for those who strive to attain to the Divine. These two levels are the uttermost boundary that we can reach by means of our own striving. Thereafter it depends upon the grace of Allāh to His creature. What is the *Ḥaqīqa*? Is it a further kind of teaching to which one graduates after long years of progress in the *Ṭarīqa*? The answer to that question, is no. The *Ḥaqīqa* is the living grace of the All-Merciful, and He bestows it upon whom He wills of His creatures.

This biography of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir demonstrates very clearly that he was a Shaikh of the *Ḥaqīqa*, and it contains thumbnail biographies of forty-three other Shaikhs of the *Ḥaqīqa*; his associates of that day and age. To understand the *Ḥaqīqa* without having experienced it is not easy, so I have excerpted for the reader some instances of the Shaikh, may Allāh be well pleased with him, passing on the contact [*wuṣūl*] or the opening [*fath*] to the *Ḥaqīqa* to others. When reading

these, it will be obvious that something more than teaching was going on, and that, in fact, those present were being initiated into a deeper and more fundamental level of their religion than they had ever experienced, a level transcending the domain of the heart and mind.

I hope that the reader will bear with and read these excerpts, because they are important keys to understanding the inner dimensions of what has been written by the biographer, Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Yayḥā at-Tādifī, in connection with the exploits [*manāqib*] of the Shaikh and his illustrious colleagues.



It was Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir al-Ḥusainī who said: “I once heard my father say: “At his regular public session [*majlis*], our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir used to deliver lectures on all the religious sciences [*ulūm*], and he always spoke spontaneously. From the moment when the Shaikh stepped up to the lectern, until well into the middle of the session, the awe he inspired would keep the audience perfectly still and quiet. No one could be heard clearing his throat, blowing his nose, making the slightest cough, or saying a word, and no one would get up from his seat.

“Then the Shaikh would say: “Now the talking [*qāl*] is over, and we are ready to receive the spiritual state [*ḥāl*]!” The people present would immediately feel an intense vibration, and they would experience the spiritual state and the rapture of ecstasy [*wajd*].

“No account of his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] would be complete, if it failed to mention the fact that his voice was always perfectly audible, so that those at the very back of the audience could hear it as clearly as those sitting closest to him, despite the vast size of the gathering.

“He used to address the unspoken thoughts and feelings [*khawāṭir*] of the people attending his session, and confront them with open disclosure.

“As soon as the Shaikh stepped up to the lectern, all the people present would stand upright in his honor. Whenever he told them to be silent, they would become so quiet, out of profound respect for him, that nothing could be heard from them at all, apart from the breaths they were breathing.”



It was al-Ḥāfiẓ Abu 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad al-Bandanījī who said: "Together with Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn ibn al-Jawzī (may Allah the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), I once attended the regular session held by our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allah bestow His mercy upon him). The Qur'an-reciter [*qārī'*] recited a Qur'ānic verse [*āya*], and the Shaikh discussed one possible interpretation [*tafsīr*] of it. I turned to Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn and said: 'Are you familiar with this particular interpretation?' His answer was yes. Then Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir mentioned another way of understanding the same verse, so I asked Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn: 'Are you also familiar with this interpretation?' Again his answer was yes. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir mentioned eleven different interpretations, and in each instance, when I asked Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn: 'Are you also familiar with this interpretation?' his answer was in the affirmative.

"Then Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir referred to yet another interpretation, so I asked Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn: 'Are you also familiar with this one?' This time his answer was: 'No, I am not acquainted with this one.' He gave me a equally negative response to each of my subsequent questions, as Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir went on to mention yet another interpretation, followed by yet another, until he reached a grand total of forty different ways of understanding that same Qur'ānic verse. Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn was utterly astonished, as he marveled at the vast scope of the knowledge demonstrated by our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allah be well pleased with him).

"Finally, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir said: 'Let us have done with the talk [*qāl*], and let us now return to the spiritual state [*ḥāl*]:

"'There is no god but Allāh! [*la ilāha illa 'llāh*]. Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh! [*Muḥammadur Rasūlu 'llāh*].' All the people in the audience were shaken with an intense vibration, and Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn ibn al-Jawzī was moved to rip his clothes to shreds."



Shaikh 'Umar al-Bazzāz has told us: "Once, while I was sitting in the presence of the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him), in his private chamber, he said to me: 'O my dear son, guard my back for me, in case the cat falls down on it!' I said to myself: 'How could the cat

get in here, since there is no skylight in the roof?" I had hardly finished my sentence, when a cat landed on my back. The Shaikh tapped his hand on my breast, and a light shone in my heart, as brightly as the sun. I discovered the Truth [*Haqq*] at that very moment, and I am better off to this day, because of that light."

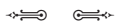


It was Shaikh 'Alī ibn Idrīs al-Ya'qūbī who said: "Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hītī took me by the hand and brought me to our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allah be well pleased with him). This was in the year [A.H.] 550. He said to him: 'This is my loyal servant, 'Alī.'

"So he took off a garment he had on him, and gave it to me to wear. 'O 'Alī,' he told me, 'you have now clothed yourself with the shirt of well-being!' In all the sixty-five years that have elapsed since I first wore it, no painful suffering has ever befallen me.

"Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hītī also brought me to him in the year [A.H.] 560. On that occasion, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir bowed his head in silence for quite a long while, then I noticed that a gleam of light had begun to emanate from him, and that it became connected with me. At the moment when this happened, I saw the occupants of the graves and tombs, and I witnessed their states and conditions. I saw the angels and their stations, and I heard their glorification of the Lord [*tasbiḥ*] in a variety of languages. I read what was inscribed on the forehead of every human being, and matters of great importance were clearly disclosed to me. Then Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allah be well pleased with him) told me: 'Just take it all in, and do not be afraid!'

"It was then that Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hītī said to him: 'O my master, I am truly afraid that he may lose his mind!' So he thumped on my chest with his hand, and I felt something inside my inner being [*bāṭin*], in the shape of an anvil, and I was not at all alarmed by anything I saw. I heard the glorification uttered by the angels (peace be upon them), and even now, I am still illumined in the paths of the Heavenly Kingdom [*Malakūt*] by the radiance of that gleam of light."



Described in this book are many of the miraculous events [*karāmāt*] that took place inwardly and outwardly at the hand of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and his fellow Shaikhs. Some might seem farfetched at first glance and it is often difficult to understand what is really being described. Take for example the following story from the life of Shaikh ‘Adī:

“Shaikh Taqī ad-Dīn also said: “Abu ‘l-Barakāt has told us: ‘One day, thirty spiritual paupers [*fuqarā*] entered the presence of my paternal uncle, Shaikh ‘Adī. Ten of them said: “O our master, speak to us about something concerning Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*].” When he spoke to them on that subject, they melted away, and all that was left in their place was a puddle of water. Then a second set of ten came forward, and said to him: “O our master, speak to us about something concerning the reality of love [*maḥabba*].” When he spoke to them on that subject, all ten of them died. Then the remaining ten came forward, and said: “O our master, speak to us about something concerning the reality of spiritual poverty [*faqr*].” When he spoke to them on that subject, they stripped themselves of whatever clothes they happened to be wearing, and went out, stark naked, into the desert.”

What is one to make of this? To attempt to take what is written at face value is obviously absurd, but if we look at it with a different perspective, we see that hidden in it is a different meaning than first strikes the eye. The *Ḥaqīqa* lies beyond the threshold of the heart and mind. When confronted with it, the rational faculty gives up, and can justly be said to “melt away.” As to the reality [*Ḥaqīqa*] of love, if confronted with the love of the Divine, the passions of the lower self [*nafs*] die, for nothing can be compared with the sweetness of experiencing the love of Allāh for His creature. Lastly, to be confronted with the reality [*Ḥaqīqa*] of spiritual poverty, means to experience the joy of understanding that, in front of the Divine, we actually own nothing; for when whatever goodness, piety and spiritual standing of ours is exposed to the Glory of the Lord (Exalted is He!), it is seen to be counterfeit and of very little worth. It is therefore a relief to divest oneself of hoarding one’s attributes [clothes] as items of spiritual value, and to go off into the wasteland of owning nothing, of being completely poor and dependent [on the Lord of All the Worlds].

Well, Allāh knows best! I have attempted to interpret for the reader only to show that this book deserves to be read with careful attention, and with an attitude that allows for meanings that may not become immediately obvious.

In this biography of the Shaikh there are many explanations, in his own words, of spiritual qualities that have great value to the seeker after spiritual Truth. Contrasted with these are excerpts from ‘Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth’ [*Al-Ghunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq*], printed in an appendix at the end of this book. I say contrasted, because in *Sufficient Provision*, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir has assembled the sayings of many other wise Shaikhs, to make his points on these same topics. I might add that the material in the appendix was included at the request of a dear friend, who felt that it would be of benefit to the reader.

Lastly, the reader will find accounts of many of the children, grandchildren and descendants of the Shaikh, which will be material of great interest to many who may have wondered about them.

Altogether, this is a treasure chest and it is no wonder to me that the author gave it the title *Necklaces of Gems*. May the reading of it be a grand adventure for you, dear reader!

Ruslan Moore  
August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1998



## Acknowledgments

*All praise is due to Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful!*

We bear witness that there is no god except Allāh, and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh!

Our Lord, thank You for giving us this wholesome task!



Grateful thanks to Muhtar Holland for devoting years of his life to translating these works; may Allāh bless him! Grateful thanks to Omar and Suliman Ghoor, their families and family friends, without whose help the publishing of this volume might have been delayed by years. Special thanks to Adnan Jeilani Sheikh, my Somali-Barawe Qadiri friend and brother, follower of Shaikh Uwais al-Barawe, who obtained a good copy of the Arabic text of *Qalā'id al-Jawābir* for translating, after we found to our dismay that the copy obtained by my brother Ridwan, in Indonesia, was missing certain pages. Thanks also to the many who have helped make this publication possible, among them the following:

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## Translator's Introduction

Biographies of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) are by no means rare. They have been compiled at fairly frequent intervals throughout the centuries since the end of his worldly life. Some have been written as separate books, while others appear as chapters or sections in historical works, biographical compendia and encyclopedias of various kinds. Most are in Arabic, and only a few have been translated into European languages.

One fairly short biography, written by adh-Dhahabī (d. A.H. 748/1348 C.E.), has been edited and translated into English by D. S. Margoliouth,<sup>1</sup> who also contributed the article ‘ABD AL-QĀDIR to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.<sup>2</sup> Many stories of the Shaikh, including versions of some of those recorded by at-Tādifi in *Necklaces of Gems*, have been available to readers of the Dutch language for several decades, in a book entitled *De Mirakelen van Abdoelkadir Djaelani*.<sup>3</sup>

Of the very earliest biographies of the Shaikh, compiled by his contemporaries, not one seems to have survived intact. Fortunately, however, these sources were available to ash-Shaṭṭanawfī, who died in A.H. 713/1314 C.E. His *Bahjat al-Asrār* [Splendor of the Mysteries] is therefore regarded as the most important of all the existing biographies of the Shaikh, even though it was written more than a century after his death. The author is acknowledged by at-Tādifi, who frequently quotes from his work in the book here presented in English translation. In one passage, for instance, at-Tādifi writes:

In his book the *Bahja*, that highly erudite scholar, Shaikh al-Imām Abu'l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Muqrī ash-Shaṭṭanawfī al-Miṣrī, provides many reports concerning...Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, including accounts of his marvelous exploits and his charismatic talents....

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* [J.R.A.S.] 1907, pp. 267–310.

<sup>2</sup> Also printed in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islām*. Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1961.

<sup>3</sup> G.W.J. Drewes and Poerbatjaraka. *De Mirakelen van Abdoelkadir Djaelani*. Bandoeng, 1938.

While at-Tādifi refers to numerous other literary sources, it is probably true that many of them derived at least some of their information from the work of ash-Shaṭṭanawfi.

### Concerning the author of *Necklaces of Gems*

It should be noted, first of all, that the spelling of the author's family surname is uncertain. In the Arabic texts, the middle consonant sometimes appears as *dāl*, requiring the transliteration "Tādifi" and sometimes as *dhāl*, which accounts for the alternative "Tādhifi." The former has been adopted throughout the present translation, but the reader should not be surprised to find the latter spelling elsewhere.

From an additional surname, we know that **Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā at-Tādifi al-Ḥalabī** was a native of the Syrian town of Aleppo [*Ḥalab*]. Most of the other known facts about him can be culled from the pages of *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir* [Necklaces of Gems]. The likely nature of his upbringing and education can be gleaned from references to the professions and spiritual affiliations of his forebears and close relatives. For instance, in a section devoted to Shaikh 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Shams ad-Dīn, whom he describes as "the principal Shaikh of the Qādiriyya, and the Shaikh of Shaikhs in Ḥamāh and all the other towns of Syria," he writes:

[Shaikh 'Abd ar-Razzāq] invested certain people with the noble tattered cloak [*khirqā*] of the Qādiriyya, among them being my master, my own father, the Chief Justice [*Qāḍī 'l-Qudāt*] Nizām ad-Dīn Abu 'l-Makārim Yaḥyā at-Tādifi al-Ḥanbalī, the Judge of Aleppo, the son of its Judge, the brother of its Judge, and the son of the daughter of its Judge. Other recipients included my father's two full brothers (my paternal uncles, in other words): the Chief Justice Kamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad at-Tādifi ash-Shāfi'ī, in Aleppo, and the erudite scholar al-Burhānī Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm at-Tādifi al-Ḥanafī. Allāh has graciously allowed me to benefit from these people during their lifetime. Another recipient was my grandfather on my father's side, the Chief Justice Jamāl ad-Dīn Yūsuf at-Tādifi al-Ḥanbalī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him).

Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā at-Tādifi died in A.H. 963/1556 C.E. By his own account, it was in the year A.H. 950 that he compiled his biography of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, under the title *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir* [Necklaces of Gems]. As he explains in his Prologue to this work, his interest in the subject was aroused when he studied the *Ta'rikh* [History] of al-'Ulaimī al-Maqdisī:

I discovered that the author had given no more than summary treatment to the biography of our Master, our Patron, our Shaikh and our Guide to Allāh (Exalted is He), Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥanbalī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and that he had made only the slightest reference to his charismatic qualities and exploits [*manāqib*]. I found this quite astonishing....

The following paragraph deserves to be highlighted by repetition here, since it contains at-Tādifī's own succinct account of how he obtained his information, and of the subjects he decided to include in his book. It also conveys a sense of the spirit in which he approached and carried out his very demanding task:

I then felt moved, by the wish to obtain good fortune, to gather together everything that I could find about the exploits of the Shaikh (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being, and may He illuminate his mausoleum), in various books, from what I heard from trustworthy sources, and from what I held in my personal recollection. I resolved to follow this information, after having mentioned his noble genealogy, with accounts of his physical constitution [*khalq*] and his moral character [*khulq*], his work [*‘amal*] and his knowledge [*‘ilm*], his methods and his spiritual counsel, his speech and his action, the children whom Allāh bestowed upon him, and his exaltation by the saints [*awliyā’*] in recognition of his proper due. I also decided to make some mention of the charismatic qualities and exploits of these saints, as well as the exploits of those who trace their spiritual affiliation to his excellency.

It is particularly important to note that at-Tādifī relied not only on “various books,” but also on what he heard from “trustworthy sources,” and his “personal recollection” of earlier encounters, notably with direct descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He describes one of these encounters in a section devoted to Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn Qāsim ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain...ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir:

I met him in the year [A.H.] 910, when I accompanied my master, my own father, on an excursion to Ḥamāh. We lodged for a time in his private retreat [*khalwa*], an apartment inside the convent [*ḡāwīya*]. He took great pains to make us comfortable, and treated us with extremely noble generosity. Through his blessed grace, we experienced all that is good.

### Concerning the contents of Necklaces of Gems

In the Contents pages at the beginning of this translated edition, the reader will find the headings and page numbers of major sections of the book, such as: **Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Children**. The inclusion of

subheadings would have made the Contents inordinately lengthy, but a few of them may be listed here, since they provide an intriguing taste of what this book contains.

From the section headed **Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Life and Exploits:**

- Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās foresees the day when Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir will be commanded to say: “This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh.”

- What price the egg, and what price the chicken?

- Jews and Christians embrace Islām at the hand of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, in the course of his public sessions.

- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir thumbs through a book on philosophy, and it turns into a well-known work on the Qur’ān.

- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir comes to be known as “The Falcon [*al-Bāz*].”

- Stories about Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir strike Abu ‘l-Faraj as farfetched, until the two of them meet at the afternoon prayer.

From the section headed **Some of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s Invocations, Exhortations and Explanations:**

- Concerning the experience of personal extinction [*fanā’*].

- Concerning truthfulness [*ṣidq*].

- Concerning the Supreme Name [*al-Ism al-A‘ẓam*].

- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir explains the reason for the difference between two apples.

As we have noted above, at-Tādifī tells us in his Prologue that he “also decided to make some mention of the charismatic qualities and exploits of [certain] saints.” This decision of his resulted in a unique feature of the book: namely, the inclusion of comparatively brief biographies of no fewer than forty-three saints [*awliyā’*], all of them known to have extolled the merits of his principal subject, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

From a glance at the Contents list, it will be apparent to the reader that some of these saintly Shaikhs are well-known figures, while some of their names will be familiar to very few. Particularly famous, along with Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī, are the two who bear the family surname

Suhrawardī: Shaikh Abu'n-Najīb as-Suhrawardī and his nephew, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Umar as-Suhrawardī, the author of *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* [Bounties of Divine Knowledge]. Shaikh Raslān ad-Dimashqī is becoming better known, especially since the recent Al-Baz publication of his *Risāla fi't-Tawhīd* [Concerning the Affirmation of Divine Oneness], together with two commentaries thereon, in English translation.<sup>4</sup> Further research into the lives and works of all these saints (may Allāh be well pleased with them) would surely be rewarding to anyone moved to undertake it.

### Concerning the literary works of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir

Most of the basic and undisputed facts of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's life (may Allāh be well pleased with him), from his entry into this world in A.H. 470/1077 C.E., until his departure from it in A.H. 561/1166 C.E., are mentioned in this work by at-Tādifī. There is no need for yet another biography in this introduction. In one area, however, some additional information may be of value, since at-Tādifī names only two of the Shaikh's literary works by their titles: *al-Ghunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq* [Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth] and *Futūḥ al-Ghaib* [Revelations of the Unseen].<sup>5</sup> Both of these have been published in English:

***Al-Ghunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq* [Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth].** Arabic text published in two parts by Dār al-Albāb, Damascus, n.d. Translated from the Arabic (in 5 vols.) by Muhtar Holland. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1997.

***Futūḥ al-Ghaib* [Revelations of the Unseen].** A collection of seventy-eight discourses. Arabic text published by Dār al-Albāb, Damascus, 1986. German translation: W. Braune. *Die Futūḥ al-Gaib des 'Abd al-Qādir*. Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1933. English translations: (1) M. Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad. *Futuh al-Ghaib* [The Revelations of the Unseen]. Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf. Repr. 1986. (2) Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Houston, Texas: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1992.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 603 below.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 27 below.

Other literary works of the Shaikh include the following:

***Al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī* [The Sublime Revelation].** A collection of sixty-two discourses delivered by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in the years A.H. 545–46/1150–52 C.E. Arabic text published by Dār al-Albāb, Damascus, n.d. Arabic text with Urdu translation: Madina Publishing Co., Karachi, 1989. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Houston, Texas: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1992.

***Malfūzāt* [Utterances].** A loosely organized compilation of talks and sayings by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Houston, Texas: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1992.

***Sirr al-Asrār* [The Secret of Secrets].** A short work, divided into twenty-four chapters. English translation: *The Secret of Secrets* by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, interpreted by Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti. Cambridge, England: The Islamic Texts Society, 1992.

***Jalā’ al-Khawāṭir* [The Removal of Cares].** A collection of sixty-two discourses delivered by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Arabic text with Urdu translation published by Maktaba Nabawiya, Lahore, n.d. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1997.

***Khamsata ‘Ashara Maktūban* [Fifteen Letters].** Translated from Persian into Arabic by ‘Alī ibn Ḥusām ad-Dīn al-Muttaqī, and from Arabic into English by Muhtar Holland. Hollywood, Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1997.

Yet other works attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir include short treatises on traditional subjects [*ma’āthir*], litanies [*awrād*; *aḥzāb*], prayers and supplications [*da‘awāt*; *munājāt*], and mystical poems [*qasā’id*]. Many of these are recorded in:

***Al-Fuyūdāt ar-Rabbāniyya* [Emanations of Lordly Grace].** Compiled by as-Sayyid al-Ḥājj Ismā‘īl ibn as-Sayyid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Qādirī. Kutub Khana Ishayat-ul-Islam, Delhi, India, n.d. English translation commissioned for publication by Al-Baz Publishing, Inc.

### Concerning the marvelous exploits of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir

While at-Tādifī mentions only two of the above titles, he certainly provides the reader with abundant accounts of the *karāmāt* [charismatic talents] and *manāqib* [always marvelous and often supernatural exploits] attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). It is for this reason, in particular, that I have drawn attention to the Shaikh’s own literary legacy.

Throughout the centuries, more than a few scholars, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, have found it difficult to reconcile two impressions of the Shaikh. They have received one impression from reading his discourses, recorded at the time of their delivery, and his treatment of virtually every Islāmic topic in his monumental work *al-Ghunya* [Sufficient Provision]. The other impression, conveyed by accounts of marvelous exploits, has prompted them to use such terms as “legendary.” According to J.S. Trimingham, for instance: “It is difficult to penetrate through the mists of legend which formed even during the lifetime of ‘Abd al-Qādir...and thickened rapidly after his death.” Citing al-Wāsiṭī, a contemporary of ash-Shaṭṭanawfī, Trimingham also maintains that “[*Bahjat al-Asrār*], the most elaborate biography of ‘Abd al-Qādir, ...completely obscures his personality and presents him as a great miracle-monger.”<sup>6</sup>

Well, should any of our readers find themselves wondering if at-Tādifī’s biography “obscures his personality,” I urge them to read at least some of the Shaikh’s own works. They can then form their individual impressions. For a start, they may find it interesting to compare the excerpts from *al-Ghunya* [Sufficient Provision], supplied in the Appendix, with sayings attributed to the Shaikh in the body of the text.

Just in case the translator’s own impression is at all relevant, let me say that I have discovered gems of enormous worth, in *Necklaces of Gems* as well as in all the works of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir himself (may Allāh be well pleased with him). I may take certain “legends” with the proverbial pinch of salt, but then salt—and even a dash of pepper—can help to bring out the flavor in certain dishes of food.

### A confession by the translator

While I apologize, of course, for any inadvertent omissions, I trust that these are few and far between, and that I have produced a

<sup>6</sup> J. Spencer Trimingham. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 40.

thoroughly comprehensive English translation of the Arabic text. One confession I must make, however. I have consciously omitted certain lines of poetry, mainly for the following reasons: (1) The unvoiced text could be read in numerous different ways, and I could not arrive at a satisfactory choice. (2) The whole point of the verse depended on the Arabic wording, and any conceivable translation would merely result in a prosaic repetition of something already stated in prose.

### **Some final invocations**

May Allāh forgive the mistakes and failings of His servants.

May Allāh look with gracious favor upon Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā at-Tādifī, the author of *Necklaces of Gems*, and may He enfold him in His mercy.

May Allāh be well pleased with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, and may He sanctify the innermost beings of all His saints.

May Allāh bless our Prophet Muḥammad, his family and his Companions, and may He grant them peace.

Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of All the Worlds.

*Āmīn.*

**Muhtar Holland**

August 1998

# Necklaces of Gems

[*Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*]

A BIOGRAPHY OF THE CROWN OF THE SAINTS;  
SHAIKH 'ABD AL-QĀDIR AL-JĪLĀNĪ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*Allāh has decreed: "I shall surely conquer,  
I and My Messengers."  
Allāh is Strong, Almighty.  
(Qur'ān 58:21)*



## Prologue

As for the friends of Allāh,  
*a-lā inna awliyā'a 'llāhi*  
surely no fear shall be upon them,  
*lā khawfun 'alai-him*  
nor shall they grieve.  
*wa lā hum yahzanūn.*  
(10:62)

In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate.

**T**he following are the words of Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā at-Tādifi, the poor servant [of the Lord], who acknowledges his sin and his shortcoming, and hopes for a hidden pardon from His tender grace. May Allāh forgive his sins, and replace his sins with blessings.

Praise be to Allāh, who has opened for His saintly friends [*awliyā'*] the paths of right guidance, and has caused all kinds of good things to come about at their hands, and has delivered them from ruin. Those who follow their example will therefore be successful and guided aright, but those who swerve from their path will fail and be ruined. Those who seek their protection will prosper and travel safely, but if anyone shuns them with rejection, he will be cut off and destroyed. I praise Him with the praise of one who knows that there is no refuge from Him except toward Him. I thank Him with the thanks of one who is firmly convinced that favors [*ni'am*] and afflictions [*niqam*] alike are entirely at His disposal. I invoke blessing and peace upon our Master, Muḥammad, and upon his family. May they enjoy the countless benefits and gracious favors of Allāh.

As for the subject of the present work, my interest was aroused when I studied “History To Rely On for Accounts of the Bygone” [*at-Ta' rīkh al-mu'tabar fī anbā' man ghabar*], the compilation of the

Chief Justice [Qādi 'l-Qudāh], Mujīr ad-Dīn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-'Ulaimī al-'Umarī al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī (may Allāh encompass him with His mercy). I discovered that the author had given no more than summary treatment to the biography of our Master, our Patron, our Shaikh and our Guide to Allāh (Exalted is He), Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī al-Ḥanbalī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and that he had made only the slightest reference to his charismatic qualities and exploits [*manāqib*]. I found this quite astonishing, and I said to myself: "Perhaps he considered him a widely known celebrity (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and therefore confined himself to this brief account. In deciding to keep it short, he may also have been influenced by the example of that most erudite scholar, Ibn al-Jawzī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him)."

I then felt moved, by the wish to obtain good fortune, to gather together everything that I could find about the exploits of the Shaikh (may Allāh sanctify his innermost being, and may He illuminate his mausoleum), in various books, from what I heard from trustworthy sources, and from what I held in my personal recollection. I resolved to follow this information, after having mentioned his noble genealogy, with accounts of his physical constitution [*khalq*] and his moral character [*khulq*], his work [*'amal*] and his knowledge [*'ilm*], his methods and his spiritual counsel, his speech and his action, the children whom Allāh bestowed upon him, and his exaltation by the saints [*awliyā'*] in recognition of his proper due. I also decided to make some mention of the charismatic qualities and exploits of these saints, as well as the exploits of those who trace their spiritual affiliation to his excellency.

It is necessary to persevere in standing at the threshold of his door, for the elevated nature of the act of following is determined by the nobility of the one who is followed, just as the copious extent of the rivers' flow depends on the magnitude of the spring that is their source.

I shall also mention his birth and the completion of his earthly life, and I shall conclude that with something concerning his charismatic qualities and exploits, and what has been said about him, keeping that fairly concise, for fear of causing boredom and ennui.

I have entitled the book:

## Necklaces of Gems:

Concerning the Charismatic Qualities and Exploits  
of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

[*Qalā’id al-Jawāhir fī Manāqib ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir*]



## The Shaikh's Genealogy

**I** turn to Allāh for help, for He is all I need, and how excellent is the Helper! Then I go on to say [concerning the subject of this book]:

He is our Master, the Shaikh of Islām, the exemplar of the splendid saints [*awliyā'*], the signpost to right guidance. Those who trace their spiritual affiliation to him are among the blissfully fortunate. He is the Lordly Cardinal Pole [*al-Qutb ar-Rabbānī*], the incomparable, the universal, the everlasting, the pure foundation, Muḥyi 'd-Dīn Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir, the son of Abū Ṣāliḥ Jangī Dost (some say Jangā Dost) Mūsā, the son of Abū 'Abdī'llāh, the son of Yaḥyā az-Zāhid, the son of Muḥammad, the son of Dāwūd, the son of Mūsā, the son of 'Abdu'llāh, the son of Mūsā al-Jawn, the son of 'Abdu'llāh al-Maḥḍ (also known by the epithet al-Mujall [the Venerable], derived from the term *ijlāl* [veneration]), the son of al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā, the son of the Commander of the Believers [*Amīr al-Mu'minīn*], Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan, the son of the Commander of the Believers, 'Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), the son of Abū Ṭālib, the son of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the son of Hāshim, the son of 'Abd Manāf, the son of Quṣayy, the son of Kilāb, the son of Murra, the son of Ka'b, the son of Lu'ayy, the son of Ghālib, the son of Qahr, the son of Mālik, the son of an-Naḍr, the son of Kināna, the son of Khuzaima, the son of Mudrika, the son of Ilyās, the son of Muḍar, the son of Nadhdhār, the son of Ma'd, the son of 'Adnān. [His surnames are] al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī al-'Alawī al-Ḥasanī al-Jilī al-Ḥanbalī.

He is the grandson [on his mother's side] of our master, the famous 'Abdu'llāh aṣ-Ṣawma'ī az-Zāhid [the Ascetic Hermit], who was one of the Shaikhs of Jilān and one of their leading ascetics. Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh was endowed with lofty spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] and

conspicuous charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]. He met with a group of the outstanding Shaikhs of the Persians [*al-ʿAjam*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them).

It was Shaikh Abū ʿAbdiʿllāh Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī who said: “Shaikh ʿAbduʿllāh aṣ-Ṣawmaʿī was one whose supplication was always answered. When he was angry [with someone], Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) was Swift in exacting retaliation, and when some business was to his liking, Allāh (Exalted is He) would carry it out as he preferred. In spite of his physical weakness and his advanced age, he performed many acts of supererogatory devotion [*nawāfil*], and constantly practiced remembrance [*dhikr*]. He was noticeably humble, and patient in preserving his spiritual state, while paying careful attention to his moments of opportunity. He used to give notice of something before it occurred, and it would happen just as he had said it would.”

Shaikh Abū ʿAbdiʿllāh Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī went on to say: “One of our companions told us how they once set out as traders in a caravan, and were attacked by horsemen in the desert of Samarqand. He said: ‘So we cried out to Shaikh ʿAbduʿllāh aṣ-Ṣawmaʿī, and there he was, standing in our midst. He uttered the call: “All-Glorious, All-Holy [*Subbūḥ Quddūs*] is our Lord, Allāh! Be gone from us, O you horsemen!” He thereby scattered them up onto the mountain peaks and down into the valleys, making us safe from their assault. But when we looked for the Shaikh amongst us, we could not find him, and we did not see where he had gone. Then, when we returned to Jilān and told the people there about it, they said: “By Allāh, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has never been away from here!””



## The Birth of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

According to the two Qur’ān-memorizers [*ḥāfiẓān*], adh-Dhahabī and Ibn Rajab, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s father was Abū Ṣāliḥ ‘Abdu’llāh, the son of Jangī Dost. Allāh knows best! The name Jangī Dost is a Persian expression, meaning “he who loves fighting.” Anyway, Allāh (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He) is indeed the One who knows best!

His mother was Umm al-Khair [Mother of Goodness] Amat al-Jabbār [Maid-servant of the All-Compelling One] Fāṭima, the daughter of Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh aṣ-Ṣawma‘ī al-Ḥusaini az-Zāhid. She had an abundant share of goodness and righteousness. It is related of her that she used to say: “When I gave birth to my son, ‘Abd al-Qādir, he would not suck my breast during the daytime of Ramaḍān. The new moon of Ramaḍān was hidden by clouds, so people came and asked me about him, and I told them: ‘He has not sipped a breast today.’ It thus became obvious that the day was the first of Ramaḍān.” The word then spread throughout the towns of Jilān, that a son had been born to the nobles, and that this was a child who refused to be suckled during the daytime in Ramaḍān. It was also said that his mother had become pregnant with him when she was sixty years of age. It is said that no woman of sixty carries a child, unless she be a woman of Quraish, and no woman of fifty carries a child, unless she be an Arab woman.

When she gave birth to him (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was received by the hand of gracious favor, and he was surrounded by enabling guidance, behind him and in front of him. He never ceased to be nurtured (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in the lap of noble kindness, nourished with the milk of blessings, guarded in safekeeping, watched over with providential care.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir leaves home and sets out for Baghdad ☞

His upbringing continued thus, until he set out for Baghdād, in the year when at-Tamīmī died. That was the year [A.H.] 488, when he had reached the age of eighteen. At that time, the Caliph in Baghdād was al-Mustazhir-bi’llāh Abu ’l-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn al-Muqtadī bi-Amri ’llāh Abu ’l-Qāsim ‘Abdu’llāh, the ‘Abbāsīd (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him).

According to Shaikh Imām Taqiyyu ’d-Dīn Muḥammad al-Wā‘iz al-Lubnānī [the Lebanese] (may Allāh bestow His pardon upon him), in his book entitled “The Garden of the Pious and the Virtues of the Excellent” [*Rawḍat al-Abrār wa Maḥāsin al-Akhyār*], this is what happened then:

When he [Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir] was about to enter Baghdād, he was stopped by al-Khiḍr (peace be upon him), who prevented him from entering the city, and told him: “I have no instruction to allow you to enter for the next seven years.” He therefore settled on the bank [of the River Tigris] for seven years, gathering vegetables of the kind permissible to eat, to the point where his neck was becoming tinged with the color green. Then he got up one night and heard a voice addressing him with the words: “O ‘Abd al-Qādir, enter Baghdād!”

He thereupon entered the city. The night was rainy and cold, so he approached the convent [*ẓāwiya*] of Shaikh Ḥammād ibn Muslim ad-Dabbās, but the Shaikh said: “Lock the door of the convent, and put out the light!” Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir just sat down by the door, and Allāh (Exalted is He) cast sleep upon him, so he fell asleep. When he awoke, he was in a state of major ritual impurity [due to the emission of semen], so he performed a total ablution. Then Allāh (Exalted is He) cast sleep upon him again, and again he lost his state of ritual purity. This same experience was repeated seventeen times, and he performed a complete ablution in the wake of each occurrence. Finally, when the dawn was at hand, the door was opened and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir stepped inside.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir meets Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās ☞

Shaikh Ḥammād came forward to welcome him, embraced him and gave him a hug. There were tears in his eyes as he said to him: “O my son, ‘Abd al-Qādir, today it is our turn to be in charge here, but tomorrow it will be your turn. So, when you have taken charge, deal fairly with this old head of gray hair!”

(This concludes the excerpt from “The Garden of the Pious and the Virtues of the Excellent” [*Rawḍat al-Abrār wa Maḥāsīn al-Akhyār*].)

The following is a quotation from “The Splendor of the Mysteries” [*Bahjat al-Asrār*], by Shaikh Imām al-Awḥad Nūr ad-Dīn Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Jarīr ibn Mi‘dād ibn Faḍl ash-Shāfi‘ī al-Lakhmī:

All hail to a newcomer, upon whose arrival the first showers of blissful good fortune began to arrive, for a land in whose towns he alighted, and where the clouds of mercy came in succession, to the general benefit of its modern and its ancient districts, and right guidance was multiplied therein, so that light was shed by its spiritual deputies [*abdāl*] and its mainstays [*awṭād*], and the delegations of good tidings arrived there on one another’s heels, so that all its propitious times and festivals [*a’yād*] dawned brightly, and the heart of ‘Irāq began to glow with the light of his love, ecstatic with joy, while the tongue of its frontier access-road responded to the advent of his countenance by uttering encomiums in praise of Allāh.

[In the words of a poet]:

Upon his arrival the clouds gave forth refreshing rain,  
and green grass covered the whole of ‘Irāq.

Sinful transgression passed away,  
and the right direction was made quite clear.

Its palm trees flourished, its desert became a haven,  
its pebbles turned into pearls, and its lights shone plain to see.

Because of him, the bosom of ‘Irāq swelled with an ardent longing,  
and in the heart of Najd his virtues were the cause of ecstasy.

In the East the sparks of his light were seen as lightning flashes,  
and in the West the mention of his splendor was heard  
as the clap of thunder.

(This concludes the excerpt from “The Splendor of the Mysteries” [*Bahjat al-Asrār*], quoted here in abridged form.)

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir embarks on the quest for knowledge. ☞

Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had come to understand that the pursuit of knowledge [*ilm*] is an obligatory religious duty [*farīda*], incumbent on every Muslim, and that it is the cure for sick souls, since it is the most explicit route to true devotion, the most effective evidence thereof, the clearest guidance thereto, the highest of all the ladders of certainty, the loftiest of all the degrees of conviction, the most magnificent of all the ranks of religion, and the most splendid of all the stations held by those who are rightly guided. Because he understood this well, he rolled up the sleeve of earnestness and serious endeavor in the effort to acquire it, and wasted no time in the pursuit of its branches and its roots. He sought out the leading Shaikhs, the signposts of right guidance, the scholars of the Islāmic community [*'ulmā' al-umma*]. He embarked on the study of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], after reading the Glorious Qur'ān until he was thoroughly familiar with it.

In studying both the inner content and the obvious meaning of Islāmic legal doctrine, he derived benefit from the wise instruction of Abu 'l-Wafā 'Alī ibn 'Uqail al-Ḥanbalī, Abu 'l-Khaṭṭāb Maḥfūz al-Kalūdhānī al-Ḥanbalī, Abu 'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusain ibn Muḥammad al-Farrā' al-Ḥanbalī, the Qāḍī [Judge] Abū Sa'id, and also, according to some accounts, Abū Sa'id al-Mubārak ibn 'Alī al-Mukharrimī al-Ḥanbalī. He learned to recognize the established doctrine of a school of law [*madhhab*], as well as areas where expert opinions differ, and he mastered both the branches and the roots of the subject.

He studied customary good manners [*adab*] under Abū Zakariyyā' Yaḥyā ibn 'Alī at-Tabrizī, and heard the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*] from a number of experts, including Abū Ghālib Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Bāqilānī, Abū Sa'id Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Khashishā, Abu 'l-Ghanā'im Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Maimūn al-Farsī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Muẓaffar, Abū Ja'far ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusain al-Qarī as-Sarrāj, Abu 'l-Qāsim 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Bannān al-Karkhī, Abū Ṭālib 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf, his paternal cousin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn

Aḥmad, Abu 'l-Barakāt Hibatu'llāh ibn al-Mubārak, Abu 'l-'Izz Muḥammad ibn al-Mukhtār, Abū Naṣr Muḥammad, Abū Ghālib Aḥmad and Abū 'Abdi'llāh Yaḥyā ([these last three being] the sons of al-Bannā'), Abu 'l-Ḥasan ibn Mubārak ibn aṭ-Ṭuyūrī, Abū Maṣṣūr 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Qazzāz, Abu 'l-Barakāt Ṭalḥa al-'Āqūlī, and yet others besides.

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir embarks on the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*]. ☞

Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) became the pupil of Abu 'l-Khair Ḥammād ibn Muslim ibn Durūh ad-Dabbās, and from him he acquired knowledge of the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*]. From him he received his basic training, and with his help he set out on the spiritual journey. May Allāh be well pleased with them both.

Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) took to wearing the noble tattered cloak [*khirqa*], which he received from al-Qāḍī [the Judge] Abū Sa'īd al-Mubārak al-Mukharrimī, of whom mention has previously been made. Al-Mukharrimī had worn it after receiving it from Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī, and al-Qurashī had acquired it from Abu 'l-Faraj aṭ-Ṭarsūsī, to whom it was handed down by Abu 'l-Faḍl 'Abd al-Wāḥid at-Tamīmī, who had received it from the hand of his own Shaikh, Shaikh Abū Bakr ash-Shiblī. Ash-Shiblī had acquired it from Shaikh Abu 'l-Qāsim al-Junaid, and al-Junaid had received it from his maternal uncle, as-Sarī as-Saqāṭī, who upon whom it had been bestowed by Shaikh Ma'rūf al-Karkhī. Al-Karkhī had received it from Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭā'ī, who had obtained it from my master, Ḥabīb al-'Ajamī. It had been given to Ḥabīb al-'Ajamī by Shaikh al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and al-Baṣrī had received it from our patron, the Commander of the Believers [*Amīr al-Mu'minīn*], 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh ennoble his countenance and be well pleased with him), who had received it from the Chieftain of the Messengers, the Beloved of the Lord of All the Worlds, Muḥammad (on him be the most excellent blessing, and the most perfect greeting of peace). As for Muḥammad himself (Allāh bless him and give him peace), he had received it from Gabriel (peace

be upon him), and Gabriel had received it from the Lord of Truth (Magnificent is His Majesty, and Sanctified be His Names).

Someone asked my master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir what he had received from the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He), and he replied: "Knowledge [*ilm*] and good manners [*adab*]."

With regard to the tattered cloak [*khirqā*], its transmission is also traced by another route, going back to 'Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Raḍī. (In the case of the tattered cloak, it should be explained, transmission is not verified by reference to an *isnād* [chain of reliable verbal reports], as required in the case of Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*]. The only factor to be considered is the existence of companionship [*ṣuḥba*] between the Shaikhs concerned.)

### ☞ Abū Sa'īd al-Mukharrimī and his schoolhouse [*madrasa*]. ☞

As for al-Mukharrimī, this is the proper spelling of his name,<sup>1</sup> which indicates his connection with the quarter of Baghdād called al-Mukharrim. Some of the sons of Yazīd ibn al-Mukharrim settled there, and that is how that quarter of the city acquired its name.

It was al-Qāḍī [the Judge] Abū Sa'īd al-Mukharrimī, referred to above, who said: "'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī wore a tattered cloak [*khirqā*] that he received from me, and I wore a tattered cloak that I received from him, so each of us obtained blessing by means of the other."

As related by that highly erudite scholar, Ibrāhīm ad-Dairī ash-Shāfi'ī, author of the compendium entitled "The Beautiful Gardens" [*ar-Rawḍ az-Zāhir*], Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir received his introduction to spiritual culture [*taṣawwuf*] from Shaikh Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusain ibn Wahra al-Hamadānī az-Zāhid [the Ascetic], of whom we shall have more to say in due course. This

<sup>1</sup> In the original text, where the Arabic words are without vowel-signs and other diacritics (except in Qur'ānic quotations), the author explains the pronunciation of this name by using the appropriate technical terminology. Since *m-kh-r-m-y* could be read in several different ways, he specifies that the first consonant *mīm* bears a *ḍamma* [the short vowel <u>]. Then he notes that the consonant *khā'* has a dot above it (to distinguish it from *jīm* and *hā'*) and that it bears a *fatha* [the short vowel <a>]. He then explains that the consonant *rā'* is undotted (to distinguish it from *zā'*), that it is doubled, and that it bears a *kasra* [the short vowel <i>]. Then comes the second *mīm*, followed by the *nisba* [the termination <-i>].

was when he (may Allāh be well pleased with him) first arrived in Baghdād, and met a number of the eminent ascetics of the time.

Abū Saʿīd al-Mukharrimī had a well-kept little schoolhouse by the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Aḏaj*]. This building was placed at the disposal of our master, Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir, and in it he gave talks to the people, whom he addressed in the language of religious exhortation [*waʿẓ*] and spiritual reminding [*tadhkīr*]. It soon became apparent that he was endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], his reputation grew, and he met with wide acceptance. The schoolhouse [*madrasa*] soon became too cramped, with so many people thronging to attend his regular discourse-session [*majlis*]. To cope with the overcrowding and the lack of space, he used to address the people while sitting by the wall, leaning on the door of the guesthouse, which opened onto the street.

☞ Enlargement of the schoolhouse, in the year  
[A.H.] 528, to accommodate Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir’s  
ever-growing audiences. ☞

The accommodation was eventually enlarged, by the addition of neighboring houses and various places in the surrounding area. The rich folk made generous donations from their assets, to pay for the structural development, while the poor folk contributed their personal labor.

An impoverished woman once came to the Shaikh with her husband, who was a member of the working class, and said to him: “This is my husband, and he still owes me my marriage-dower [*mahr*] of twenty dinārs in gold coin. I have given him half of it, but on one condition: he must put in work at your schoolhouse, to the value of the remaining half.” The husband had accepted this offer, so the woman produced the written agreement and handed it over to the Shaikh. While employing the man in the schoolhouse, the Shaikh gave him his wage every other day—recognizing that he was poor and needy, and had not a thing in his possession—until his work had earned him five dinārs. Then the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) brought out the written contract and placed it in his hand, saying: “You are hereby free of any further obligation.”

The reconstructed schoolhouse was completed in the year [A.H.] 528. It came to be known as Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's College, and he presided over its use for purposes of educational instruction, the formulation of legal opinion [*fatwā*], and religious exhortation, along with the exercise of independent judgment [*ijtihād*] in matters of knowledge and practice. There he received visits and pledges of material support from all the towns and countries, near and far. A congregation of the scholars and the righteous gathered in his presence there, from all the distant horizons. They relieved him of practical burdens, and listened to what he had to say. The situation developed to the point where he was in charge of the training of all the spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] in 'Irāq.

Tongues were exercised in various ways, in the effort to describe the marvels of his attributes. Some described him as "Master of the Two Explanations [*Dhu 'l-Bayānain*]," while others characterized him as "Noble through Two Grandfathers, and thus on Both Sides of the Family" [*Karīm al-Jaddain wa 'ṭ-Ṭarafain*]." Someone gave him the title "Holder of the Two Proofs and the Two Mandates [*Ṣāhib al-Burhānain wa 's-Sulṭānain*]," while another called him "The Imām of the Two Parties and the Two Paths [*Imām al-Farīqain wa 'ṭ-Ṭarīqain*]." He was also named "Master of the Two Lamps and the Two Routes [*Dhu 's-Sirājāin wa 'l-Minhājain*]."



## Scholarly Shaikhs who became affiliated with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

**A**s a result of all this, a large band of religious scholars [‘*ulamā*’] became actively affiliated with him, and no one could ever count the number of people who enrolled as his students. Here is a list of some of the Shaikhs who established an affiliation with him, and who received instruction from him in the various branches of knowledge:

- Shaikh al-Imām al-Qudwa [the Exemplar] Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān ibn Marzūq ibn Ḥamid ibn Salāma al-Qurashī, who was a settler in Egypt.

Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq once said: “When my father (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) made the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*], in the year when I accompanied him, he got together at ‘Arafāt with the two Shaikhs, Ibn Marzūq and Abū Madyan. Each of these two received from my father the blessed gift of a tattered cloak [*khirqā*]. They sat in his presence and listened to some of the stories he had to tell.”

It was Shaikh Sa’d, the son of the above-mentioned ‘Uthmān ibn Marzūq, who said: “My father (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) would often tell us: ‘Our Shaikh, ‘Abd al-Qādir, said such-and-such, and such-and-such. I once saw our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, doing such-and-such, together with that learned Imām and Judge [*Qāḍī*], Abū Ya‘lā Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Farrā’ al-Ḥanbalī.’” It was ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn al-Akhḍar who said: “I once heard Abū Ya‘lā say: “I often sat in the company of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and I was a proponent of what he sought to communicate.”

- Shaikh al-Faqīh [the Jurist] Abu 'l-Faṭḥ Naṣr al-Mannī.
- Shaikh Abū Muḥammad Maḥmūd ibn 'Uthmān al-Baqqāl.
- Shaikh al-Imām Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn Abū Naṣr ibn 'Alī al-Ghazālī.
- Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Fārisī [the Persian].
- Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh ibn Aḥmad al-Khashshāb.
- Shaikh al-Imām 'Amr 'Uthmān, who was given honorific surname "The Shāfi'ī of His Age."
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn al-Kizān.
- Shaikh al-Faqīh [the Jurist] Raslān ibn 'Abdi'llāh ibn Sha'bān.
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Qā'id al-Awānī.
- Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh ibn Sinān ar-Rudainī.
- Shaikh al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abdi'llāh ibn Rāfi' al-Anṣārī.
- Shaikh Ṭalḥa ibn Muẓaffar ibn Ghānim al-'Athamī.
- Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Sa'd ibn Wahb ibn 'Alī al-Harawī.
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn al-Azhar aṣ-Ṣirāfi.
- Shaikh Yahyā ibn al-Baraka Maḥfūz ad-Dībaqī.
- Shaikh 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Wahb al-Azjamī.
- Shaikh Qādi 'l-Quḍāh [the Chief justice] 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Īsā ibn Hirbās al-Mārā'i, and his brother 'Uthmān, and his son 'Abd ar-Raḥmān.
- Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh ibn Naṣr ibn Ḥamza al-Bakrī.
- Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Abi 'l-Faḍl al-Qafaṣī.
- Shaikh 'Alī ibn Abī Zāhir al-Anṣārī.
- Shaikh 'Abd al-Ghanī ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī al-Ḥāfiẓ [the Qur'ān-memorizer].
- Shaikh al-Imām Muwaffaq ad-Dīn 'Abdu'llāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Qudāmā al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī.
- Shaikh Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī.

It was Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Umar al-Maqdisī who said: “I once heard my paternal uncle, Shaikh Muwaffaq ad-Dīn, say: ‘I and al-Hāfiẓ ‘Abd al-Ghanī received the tattered cloak [*khirqā*] from the hand of the Shaikh al-Islām, ‘Abd al-Qādir, both of us at the very same time. We studied jurisprudence [*fiqh*] under him, listened to his wise advice, and derived great benefit from his fellowship, although we only knew him for the last fifty nights of his life.

- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Bakhtiyār.
- Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdu’llāh ibn Abi ’l-Ḥasan al-Jibānī.
- Shaikh Khalaf ibn ‘Abbās al-Miṣrī.
- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Mun‘im ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥarrānī.
- Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaddād al-Yamanī.
- Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh al-Asadī al-Yamanī.
- Shaikh ‘Aṭīf ibn Ziyād al-Yamanī.
- Shaikh ‘Umar ibn Aḥmad al-Yamanī al-Hajarī.
- Shaikh Mudāfi‘ ibn Aḥmad.
- Shaikh Ibrāhīm ibn Bishārat al-‘Adl.
- Shaikh ‘Umar ibn Mas‘ūd al-Bazzāz, and his teacher, Mīr ibn Muḥammad al-Jilānī.
- Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh al-Baṭā’ihī, the settler in Baalbek [*Ba‘labakk*].
- Shaikh Makkī ibn Abī ‘Uthmān as-Sa‘dī, and his sons ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān and Ṣāliḥ.
- Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-‘Akbarī.
- Shaikh Abu ’l-Qāsim ibn Abī Bakr Aḥmad, and his brothers Aḥmad and ‘Atīq.
- Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Abī Naṣr al-Junāyidi.
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Abi ’l-Makārim al-Ḥujja al-Ya‘qūbī.
- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Dayyāl, and his son Abu ’l-Faraj.
- Shaikh Abū Aḥmad al-Faḍīla.
- Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Najm al-Khazrajī.

- Shaikh Yahyā at-Takrīnī.
- Shaikh Hilāl ibn Umayya al-‘Adanī.
- Shaikh Yūsuf Muẓaffar al-‘Āqūlī.
- Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Ismā‘il ibn Ḥamza.
- Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Manṣūrī Sadūnat aṣ-Ṣirīfinī.
- Shaikh ‘Uthmān al-Bāsirī.
- Shaikh Muḥammad al-Wā‘iz al-Khayyāt.
- Shaikh Tāj ad-Dīn ibn Baṭṭa.
- Shaikh ‘Umar ibn al-Madāyīnī.
- Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Baqā.
- Shaikh Muḥammad an-Nakhhāl.
- Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Kalaf.
- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Miṣrī.
- Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Walid.
- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Muḥsin ibn ad-Duwaira.
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Abi ‘l-Ḥusain.
- Shaikh Dalīf al-Ḥuraimī.
- Shaikh Aḥmad ibn ad-Dībaqī.
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmād al-Mu‘adhdhin [the Muezzin].
- Shaikh Yūsuf ibn Hibatu ‘llāh ad-Dimashqī.
- Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Muṭī‘.
- Shaikh ‘Alī ibn an-Nafīs al-Ma‘mūnī.
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn al-Laith aḍ-Ḍarīr.
- Shaikh ash-Sharīf Aḥmad ibn Manṣūr.
- Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Abī Bakr ibn Idrīs.
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Naṣra.
- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥarrānī.

There are many more besides these, but we cannot possibly mention them all by name in this summary account, for fear of prolonging it to the point of causing irritation and discomfort.

## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s physical build and bearing.

**I**t was Shaikh Muwaffaq ad-Dīn ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Our Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was of slender build, of medium height, and broad in the chest. He had a full beard, which was brown throughout its length, and his eyebrows were joined, though almost imperceptibly. He was endowed with a clearly audible voice, a dignified bearing, a noble character, and a total comprehension.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him.”

### ☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s preeminent position in Baghdād. ☞

In his book the *Bahja*, that highly erudite scholar, Shaikh al-Imām Abu ’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Muqrī ash-Shaṭṭanawfi al-Miṣrī, provides many reports concerning our own master and Shaikh, the Reviver of the Sunna and the Religion [Muḥyi ’s-Sunna wa ’d-Dīn], Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī, including accounts of his marvelous exploits and his charismatic talents (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He attributes the following report to Qādi ’l-Quḍāh [Chief Justice] Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad, the son of Shaikh al-‘Imād Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī:

“I heard our Shaikh, Muwaffaq ad-Dīn ibn Qudāma, say: ‘We entered Baghdād in the year [A.H.] 561, and we found that leadership there had accrued to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, in the domains of religious knowledge and practice, spirituality [*ḥāl*], and legal consultation [*istiftā’*], to such a degree that no seeker of knowledge would

need to go looking for anyone other than him. This was due to his mastery of a vast array of the sciences, his inexhaustible patience with serious students, and the breadth of the feeling within his breast. He was the source of complete satisfaction, and Allāh had made him the repository of beautiful qualities and precious states of being. I have never seen the like of him again.”

Another reporter said: “His silence was more typical of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) than his talking. When he did speak, it was to give utterance to spontaneously received ideas [*‘ala ’l-khawātir*]. He was totally accessible, for he never left his schoolhouse, except to attend the Friday prayer in the congregational mosque [*jāmi‘*], or to spend some time in his guesthouse [*ribāṭ*].

“The bulk of the people of Baghdād repented their sins at his hands, and the majority of the Jews and Christians embraced Islām. He used to proclaim the Truth from the pulpit, without reservation, and he would not soften his reproachful criticism of those who were on friendly terms with tyrannical wrongdoers. When al-Muqtafi bi-Amri’llāh, the Commander of the Believers [*Amīr al-Mu’minīn*], appointed Abu ’l-Wafā Yaḥyā ibn Sa’id ibn al-Muẓaffar, commonly known as Ibn al-Mizḥam az-Ẓālim [Son of Push-and-Shove, the Tyrant], to the office of judge, the Shaikh addressed him from the pulpit, saying: ‘You have set in authority over the Muslims the most tyrannical of tyrants. What explanation will you give tomorrow [on the Day of Resurrection], in the presence of the Lord of All the Worlds, the Most Merciful of the merciful?’ On hearing this, the Caliph shook and trembled, then burst into tears. He promptly dismissed the judge concerned.”

In his *Ta’rīkh* [History], al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Uthmān adh-Dhahabī tells the reader: “It was Abū Bakr ibn Ṭarkhān who informed us that Shaikh al-Muwaffaq once told him, in response to a question about Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘We came in contact with him during the latter part of his life, so he invited us to make ourselves at home in his schoolhouse, where he took good care of us. He sometimes sent his son, Yaḥyā, to see to the lighting of our lamp, and he sometimes sent us food from his own kitchen. He used to join us

in performing the obligatory ritual prayer [*farīda*], acting as prayer leader [*imām*]. In the morning, I used to recite to him, relying on my memory, from “The Book of the Tattered Cloaks” [*Kitāb al-Khiraq*], and al-Ḥāfiẓ ‘Abd al-Ghanī would recite to him from “The Book of Guidance concerning The Book [of Allāh]” [*Kitāb al-Hidāya fi ‘l-Kitāb*]. No one read to him at that time, apart from the two of us. We stayed with him for a month and nine days, then he died, and we performed the funeral prayer for him at night, in his schoolhouse.’

“I never heard more accounts of anyone’s charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], than those related about him. I never saw anyone else receive more veneration from the people, for the sake of the religion. Yet we have heard only a few bits and pieces about him.”

In *Ta’rīkh al-Islām* [The History of Islām], we read: “Shaikh Abū Muḥammad Muḥyi ’s-Sunna-wa-’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ ‘Abdī’llāh ibn Jangā Dost al-Ḥanbalī az-Zāhid [the Ascetic] was the rightful owner of charismatic talents and spiritual stations. He was the Shaikh of the Islāmic jurists [*fuqahā’*] and of the paupers [*fuqarā’*]. He was the Leader [*Imām*] of his age, the Cardinal Pole [*Qutb*] of his era, and the Shaikh of the Shaikhs of his time, beyond any contention.”

At the end of the section devoted to his biography [*tarjama*], the author says: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was a chieftain in knowledge and practice, and indeed in all respects. His charismatic talents were repeatedly manifested in abundance, and there has been no one like him to take his place after him.”

In *Sīrat an-Nubalā’* [Biography of the Nobles], the author refers to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir as follows:

“The Shaikh, the Leader [*al-Imām*], the Scholar [*al-‘Ālim*], the Ascetic [*az-Zāhid*], the Knower by Direct Experience [*al-‘Ārif*], the Exemplary Model [*al-Qudwa*], the Shaikh of Islām, the Signpost of the Saints [*‘Alam al-Awliyā’*], the Crown of the Chosen [*Tāj al-Aṣfiyā’*], the Reviver of the Sunna [Muḥyi ’s-Sunna], the Killer of Heretical Innovation [*Mumīt al-Bid‘a*], the Stronghold of Knowledge [*Ma‘qil al-‘Ilm*], the Noble Chieftain [*as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf*], the Highly Esteemed Patrician [*al-Ḥasīb an-Nasīb*], the Memorizer of

the Traditions [*Hāfiẓ al-Aḥādīth*]*—*whose ancestor was the Chieftain of the Messengers [*Sayyid al-Mursalīn*], Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace)—Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Jilī al-Ḥanbalī, the Shaikh of Baghdād and other cities. May Allāh be well pleased with him.” (This concludes the abridged quotation.)

In *al-'Ibar* [Noteworthy Examples], the author describes him as: “Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ 'Abdu'llāh ibn Jangī Dost al-Jilī, the Shaikh of Baghdād, the Ascetic, the Shaikh of the Era, the Exemplary Model of Those who Know by Direct Experience [*Qudwat al-'Ārifīn*], the Rightful Owner of Spiritual Stations and Charismatic Talents [*Ṣāhib al-Maqāmāt wa 'l-Karāmāt*], Professor of the Jurists of the Ḥanbalī School [*Mudarris al-Ḥanābila*], the Reviver of the Religion [*Muḥyi 'd-Dīn*]. Preeminence eventually accrued to him in the domain of religious and spiritual exhortation [*wa'ẓ*], and in the expression of spontaneously received ideas [*kalām 'ala 'l-khawāṭir*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him.”

The following quotation is from the *Ta'rikh* [History] of al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Sa'īd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr as-Sam'ānī:

“Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir was from the people of Jilān. He became the Leader of the Jurists of the Ḥanbalī School [*Imām al-Ḥanābila*] and their Shaikh in his era. He was a righteous legal expert [*faqīh*] and a good servant of the religion. He was devoted to the frequent practice of remembrance [*dhikr*], constantly engaged in contemplation, and easily moved to tears.” (Here ends the passage I have excerpted.)

In another *Ta'rikh* [History], this one by Muḥibbad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn an-Najjār, the author states:

“'Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ 'Abdu'llāh ibn Jangā Dost az-Zāhid was from the people of Jilān. He was one of the leaders of those Muslims who put their knowledge into active practice, and he was manifestly endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]. He is said to have entered Baghdād in the year [A.H.] 488, when he was eighteen years of age. He studied Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], mastering the roots and branches of the subject, as well as the differences of opinion among the experts. He attended classes on the Prophetic Tradition

[*Ḥadīth*]. He also made a serious study of religious exhortation [*waʿẓ*], to the point where he excelled therein.

“He then felt the need to withdraw, in order to practice seclusion [*khalwa*], spiritual training [*riyāḍa*], traveling [*siyāha*], intense concentration on the inner struggle [*mujaḥada*], the experiencing of difficult states and conditions, the tackling of tough problems in opposition to the lower self [*nafs*], the constant endurance of sleeplessness and hunger, and learning how to survive in the wasteland and the deserts.

“He became the pupil of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās az-Zāhid [the Ascetic], from whom he acquired knowledge of the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*]. Then Allāh presented him to the people, his fellow creatures, and caused him to experience a magnificent reception from both the élite and the general mass.” (End of quote.)

In the *Ṭabaqāt* [Generations] of al-Ḥāfiẓ Zaid ad-Dīn ibn Rajab, we read:

“‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Šāliḥ ‘Abdu’llāh ibn Jangā Dost ibn Abī ‘Abdi’llāh al-Jilī (al-Baghdādī at a later stage) az-Zāhid [the Ascetic] was the Shaikh of the Age, the Erudite Scholar of the Era [*‘Allāmat al-Ḥīn*], the Exemplary Model of Those who Know by Direct Experience [*Qudwat al-‘Ārifīn*], the Sultān of the Shaikhs, the Chieftain of the People of the Spiritual Path [*Sayyid Ahl aṭ-Ṭarīqa*], the Reviver of the Religion [*Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn*], Abū Muḥammad....”

Further along in this biographical account [*tarjama*], the author tells us:

“He finally became available to the people, and was accorded a complete acceptance. The advocates of the noble Sunna were greatly helped by his appearance in the public arena, while it spelled grave disappointment for the proponents of heretical innovations and sectarian tendencies [*ahl al-bida‘ wa ‘l-ahwā’*].

“He became famous for his spiritual states [*aḥwāl*], his sayings and talks [*aqwāl*], his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] and his illuminating disclosures [*mukāshafāt*]. Requests for legal pronouncements [*fatāwī*] came to him from all the countries and districts, and he was viewed with awe and dread by the Caliphs, the government ministers, the kings, and their subordinates.” (Here ends this abridged excerpt from the work cited above.)

This next quotation is from the *Ta'rikh* [History] of Qāḍī 'l-Qudāh [Chief Justice] Muḥibb ad-Dīn al-'Ulaimī:

“Our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was the Leader of the Jurists of the Ḥanbali School [*Imām al-Ḥanābila*] and their Shaikh in his era. He is the author of a book entitled ‘Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth’ [*al-Ghunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq*], and of another book called ‘Revelations of the Unseen’ [*Futūḥ al-Ghaib*].”

In the book entitled “The Baghdādī Shaikhdom” [*al-Mashyakhat al-Baghdādiyya*], by ar-Rashīd ibn Maslama, the following statement is attributed to al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū 'Abdī'llāh Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad al-Barzālī al-Ishbīlī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him):

“‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī was the expert jurist of the Ḥanbali and Shāfi'ī schools [*faqīh al-Ḥanābila wa 'sh-Shāfi'iyya*] in Baghdād, and the Shaikh of both those communities. He was accorded complete acceptance by the jurists [*fuqahā'*], the spiritual paupers [*fuqarā'*], and all the common people. He was one of the supporting pillars of Islām, and the source of benefit to both the élite and the ordinary folk. He was someone whose prayer was sure to be answered, readily moved to tears, constant in the practice of remembrance [*dhikr*], frequently engaged in contemplation, tenderhearted, always of good cheer, kindly by disposition, generous of hand, remarkable for knowledge, noble in traits of character, and noble by lines of descent, as well as having a firm foothold in worshipful service [*'ibāda*] and the exercise of independent judgment [*ijtihād*].”

It was Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'd ad-Dārī who said: “Our Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to dress in the clothing of the scholars [*'ulamā'*], wearing a hood and gown. He used to ride a mule, and the saddle-cover would be raised in front of him [when he set out to ride].<sup>2</sup> He used to speak on a high lectern, and his speech was both rapid and highly audible. His word had only to be heard to be obeyed, and whenever he gave a command, it would meet with immediate compliance. Whenever a hard heart beheld him, it would be reduced to humility.”

<sup>2</sup> See p. 79 below.

## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s outspokenness in enjoining what is right and fair, and forbidding what is wrong and unfair.

According to al-Ḥāfiẓ ‘Imād ad-Dīn ibn Kathīr, in his *Ta’rīkh* [History]:

“Shaikh Muḥyi ’s-Sunna-wa-’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ Abū Muḥammad al-Jīlī entered Baghdād, where he attended lectures on the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*], and concentrated on the subject until he became extremely proficient in it.”

Further along in the same work, we read:

“He occupied a commanding position in the fields of Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*], Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], and religious exhortation [*wa’ẓ*], and in the sciences concerned with the facts of real experience [*‘ulūm al-ḥaqā’iq*]. He had an excellent bearing [*ṣamt*], and he normally maintained a dignified silence [*ṣamt*], except when it came to enjoining what is right and fair, and forbidding what is wrong and unfair [*al-amr bi’l-ma’rūf wa ’n-nahy ‘ani ’l-munkar*].<sup>3</sup> He never restrained his tongue from enjoining what is right and fair, and forbidding what is wrong and unfair, whether his targets were the Caliphs, the Viziers, the Sultans, the judges, the privileged few, or the people at large. He used to address them openly and frankly on such matters, in public situations, from the pulpits [of the mosques], and at special gatherings and receptions. He would rebuke anyone who made friends with tyrannical oppressors, and, since he was acting entirely for the sake of Allāh, he was unaffected by the censure of any critic.

<sup>3</sup> In his monumental work entitled *Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth* [*al-Ghunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq*], Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has devoted a whole chapter to the duty to enjoin what is right and fair, and forbid what is wrong and unfair [*al-amr bi’l-ma’rūf wa ’n-nahy ‘ani ’l-munkar*]. (See Vol. 1 of the Al-Baz edition, pp. 151–70.)

“He was noted for a considerable degree of pious abstinence [*zuhd*], and he was endowed with supernatural spiritual states [*aḥwāl khāriqāt al-‘ādāt*] and revelatory disclosures [*mukāshafāt*]. All in all, he was one of the leaders of the great Shaikhs. May Allāh sanctify his innermost being, and may He illuminate his mausoleum!”

(This concludes the abridged excerpt from the work cited above.)

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s generous hospitality  
and his remarkable patience. ☞

Every night, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would order the spreading of the table mat. He would eat with guests, and sit in the company of the handicapped. He was very patient with seekers of knowledge, so that no one who sat with him could imagine himself being treated more generously by anyone else. He would miss any friends who were absent, and would make enquiries about their situation, preserving his affection for them, and pardoning their bad deeds. If someone made him a solemn assurance, on oath, he would take him at his word, while concealing what he actually knew about him.

He had a supply of wheat, cultivated as lawful food [*ḥalāl*] by one of his companions from the rural outskirts, who planted it for him every year. Another friend of his used to grind it and bake it for him, producing four or five flat loaves of bread, which he would bring to him at the end of each day. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would then distribute some of the bread among those present in his company, piece by piece. Then he would store the rest for his own purposes. His manservant, Muẓaffar, would stand at the door of his house, holding the bread on a tray in his hand, and calling out: “Who would like some bread? Who would like to eat supper? Who would like a place to shelter for the night?” If the Shaikh received a gift, he would distribute it, or part of it, among those present in his company, and he would find some way to compensate the giver. He would also accept a votive offering, and eat some of it himself. May Allāh be well pleased with him.

In his *Ta’rīkh* [History], the highly erudite scholar Ibn Najjār informs us that it was al-Jubbā’ī who said:

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir once told me: ‘I made a thorough scrutiny of all human actions, and I did not find any deed amongst them more meritorious than the providing of food, nor anything more noble than good moral character.<sup>4</sup> I would love to hold this world in my hand, so that I could feed it to the hungry!’ He also said to me: ‘All I need is a sieve that keeps nothing from passing through. If a thousand *dinārs* [gold coins] came my way, they would not even spend the whole night in my company.’”

It was Aḥmad ibn al-Mubārak ar-Marfa‘ānī who said: “Among those who took tuition in Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, there was a Persian called Ubayy. He was totally absentminded, devoid of intellectual capacity, and he could hardly understand a thing, except after wearisome trouble and toil. He was there in our class one day, reading aloud to the Shaikh, when in came Ibn as-Samḥal, who had just arrived to pay the Shaikh a visit. The visitor was amazed at the Shaikh’s patience with his student, and as soon as Ubayy had got up and left the room, Ibn as-Samḥal turned to the Shaikh and said: ‘I am truly astonished by your patience with this would-be jurist [*mutafaqqih*]!’ To this the Shaikh replied: ‘My tiresome labor with him will be soon be over. Before the week is out, he will have passed on to Allāh (Exalted is He).’

“We were so surprised to hear him say such a thing, that we took to counting the days, one by one, until Ubayy died, on the last day of the week. Ibn as-Samḥal was in attendance that day, in order to join his funeral prayer, and he expressed his amazement at the Shaikh’s announcement of his death, before the arrival of his appointed term.

“May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, and may He be well pleased with our Shaikh!”

<sup>4</sup>In the work referred to in note 3 on p 28 above, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has devoted an illuminating section to goodness of moral character [*ḥusn al-khulq*]. (See Vol. 5 of the Al-Baz edition, pp. 126–31.)

## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s paternal aunt is asked to pray for relief from the drought afflicting Jilān.

**W**e owe this next report to the two Shaikhs, Abu ‘l-‘Abbās Aḥmad and Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Muṭbaqī, who said:

“The land of Jilān was once suffering from drought, and its inhabitants offered a prayer for rain.<sup>5</sup> They received no answer to their prayer, however, and obtained no relief from the drought, so they went to call upon the maternal aunt of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). She was a righteous woman, endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]. Her personal name was ‘Ā’isha, and her surname [*kunya*]<sup>6</sup> was Umm Muḥammad bint ‘Abdī’llāh (may Allāh be well pleased with her). They asked her to offer a prayer for relief from drought [*istisqā’*] on their behalf, so she went into the courtyard of her house, swept the ground, and said: ‘O my Lord, I have done the sweeping, so now it is Your turn to do the sprinkling!’ They did not have long to wait, before the sky poured forth rain like the mouths of waterskins. As they made their way back to their homes, the people found themselves wading through water.

“May Allāh be well pleased with that lady!”

<sup>5</sup> For Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s own detailed account of the ritual prayer for relief from drought [*ṣalāt al-istisqā’*], see Vol. 4, pp. 250–55 of the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above.

<sup>6</sup> The *kunya* is a surname of relationship, in which the first element may be *Abū* [Father (of)...], or *Umm* [Mother (of)...], or *Ibn* [Son (of)...], or *Bint* [Daughter (of)...].

## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir bids his mother farewell, after promising to commit himself to truthfulness [*ṣidq*].

**I**t was Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Qā’id al-Awānī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: “I was once in the company of my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), so I asked him a number of questions, one of them being: ‘Upon what foundation have you built this business of yours?’ To this he replied: ‘On the basis of truthfulness [*ṣidq*].’<sup>7</sup> I have never told a lie, not even when I was at the elementary school.’ Then he went on to say: ‘While I was still a youngster in our home country [of Jilān], I went out to the rural area on the edge of town, on the Day of ‘Arafa,<sup>8</sup> and I followed a cow as it was plowing the fields. Another cow turned to me, and it said: “O ‘Abd al-Qādir, it is not for this that you have been created!” I promptly ran back to our house, feeling utterly terrified, and climbed up onto the roof of the house.

“From up there on the roof, I could actually see the people performing the Pilgrim rite of standing at ‘Arafāt [thousands of miles away, in the neighborhood of Mecca]. So I went to find my mother, and I said to her: “Give me as a present to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and grant me your permission to make the journey to Baghdād, where I shall strive to acquire knowledge, and where I shall visit with the righteous.” Needless to say, she asked me to explain the reason for this request, so I told her my story. She burst

<sup>7</sup> In the major work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has devoted an enlightening section to the subject of truthfulness [*ṣidq*]. (See Vol. 5, pp. 157–60, of the Al-Baz edition.)

<sup>8</sup> For Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s extensive treatment of the special qualities of the Day of ‘Arafa, which marks the climax of the Pilgrimage [*Hajj*], see the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. (Vol. 3, pp. 204–27, of the Al-Baz edition.)

into tears, then went and fetched eighty dinārs [gold coins], which my father had left her as an inheritance. She set forty dinārs aside for my brother, then stitched the other forty dinārs inside the lining of my coat, and gave me permission to travel abroad. She also made me promise to commit myself to truthfulness [*ṣidq*], in whatever circumstances and conditions I might find myself. When she stepped out of doors to bid me farewell, she said: "O my son, away you go, for I have detached myself from you for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), knowing that I shall not see this face of yours again, until the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*]."

☞ How seasoned highway robbers were moved  
to repentance at the hands of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. ☞

"I traveled with a small caravan, bound for Baghdād. When we had reached the vicinity of Hamadhān, and found ourselves in a stretch of rugged terrain, sixty men on horseback suddenly attacked us from an ambush, and seized the caravan. None of them took the slightest notice of me personally, until one of the brigands turned to me in passing, and said: "Hey there, poor beggar, what do you have with you?" So I told him: "Forty dinārs," and he said: "Where are they?" "Stitched in the lining of my coat," I replied, "underneath my armpit." He assumed that I was testing his sense of humor, so he left me alone and moved elsewhere. Then a second brigand passed by me, and when he asked me the same question, exactly as the first had asked it, I repeated the answer I had given the first time, and so he also left me alone.

"Then the pair of them got together in the presence of their leader, and they told him what they had heard from me. "Bring him here to me," said the leader, so they brought me to him. They were up on a hill, sharing out the goods they had robbed from the caravan. "What do you have with you?" he asked me, so I said: "Forty dinārs." He then asked: "Where are they?" and I told him: "Stitched in the lining of my coat, underneath my armpit." So he commandeered my coat, ripped the stitching apart, and discovered that it did indeed have forty dinārs inside the lining. "Whatever prompted you to make this confession?" he wanted to know, so I told him: "My mother made

me promise to commit myself to truthfulness, and I would never betray my binding covenant with her.”

“As soon as he heard these words, the chief brigand began to weep, and he said through his tears: “You did not betray your mother’s covenant, whereas I, for so many years up to this present day, have been betraying the covenant of my Lord!” He thereupon repented at my hands, and his fellow brigands said to him: “You have been our leader in highway robbery [*qat’ at-ṭarīq*],<sup>9</sup> and now you shall be our leader in repentance [*tauba*].”<sup>10</sup> So they all repented at my hands, and they restored to the caravan whatever items they had seized from the travelers. They were thus the very first of all those sinners who have by now repented at my hands.”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s answer to the question:  
 “When did you first become aware that you were  
 the saintly friend of Allāh (Exalted is He)?” ☞

“Another question put to the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was this: ‘When did you first become aware that you were the saintly friend [*walī*] of Allāh (Exalted is He)?’ To this he responded by saying: ‘I was just a ten-year-old boy at the time, still in our home country [of Jilān]. I used to leave our house to go to the elementary school, and I could see the angels (peace be upon them) walking along all around me. Then, when I arrived at the school, I heard the angels say: “Clear a space for the saintly friend [*walī*] of Allāh, so that he can sit himself down!” One day, a man passed by us on the road, someone I did not recognize on that occasion, and I heard the angels saying something of that sort to him. The man asked one of them: “Who is this boy?” So one of them told him: “This is a member of the House of the Nobles,” and he said: “A rôle of tremendous importance lies in store for this young fellow. This is

<sup>9</sup> Highway robbery [*qat’ at-ṭarīq*] is one of those extremely serious offenses for which Islāmic law prescribes specific penalties [*ḥudūd*, plural of *ḥadd*]. If highway robbery is committed without murder, the punishment is amputation of the hands and feet. In the case of robbery with murder, the punishment is death by the sword or crucifixion.

<sup>10</sup> For Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s most comprehensive discussion of the important subject of repentance [*tauba*], see the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. (Vol. 2, pp. 5–45, and Vol. 3, 327–29, of the Al-Baz edition.)

someone who will give and not withhold, who will enable and not raise obstacles, who will be close [to the Truth] and not prone to being cheated or deceived.” Not till forty years later did I finally recognize that man, and then I realized that he was one of the spiritual deputies [*abdāl*] of that historical time.’

“The Shaikh also said (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘I was a youngster in my family, and whenever I went outside, intending to play with the other boys in the neighborhood, I would hear a voice telling me: “[Come] toward Me, O blessed one [*ilayya yā mubārak*]!” I would run away in a panic from that sound, and hurl myself into my mother’s lap. How should I not hear this now, in my moments of private retreat?’”

☞ As a young man newly arrived in Baghdād,  
Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir faces a hard struggle for  
bare survival. ☞

To quote the words of Shaikh Ṭalḥa ibn Muẓaffar al-‘Althamī: “Our Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: ‘I stayed in Baghdād for twenty days, but I could not find the means to sustain my survival. I could not find permissible food to eat, so I went out to the Great Porch of Chosroes [*Īwān Kisrā*], searching for permissible subsistence. There I encountered seventy men from among the saints [*awliyā’*], all of them searching for the same thing. I said to myself: “It is not in keeping with chivalry [*murū’a*], for me to compete with them.” I therefore returned to Baghdād, where I met a man whom I did not recognize, though he was an inhabitant of my own hometown. He gave me some clippings and filings of precious metal, and he told me: “Your mother sent these to you, with me as the carrier.” I paused long enough to take out a portion, and set it aside for myself, then I hurried off to the wasteland around the Great Porch, where I distributed the rest among those seventy. “What is this?” they asked, so I explained: “This just came to me as a present from my mother, and I did not see fit to keep it all for myself, instead of sharing it with you.” Then I went back to Baghdād, and used the portion I still had with me to buy some food. I invited the poor folk to join me, and we ate together.’”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is on the brink of death from starvation, when he meets another young man from Jilān. ☞

It was Abū Bakr at-Taimī who said: “I once heard our master, Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn [‘Abd al-Qādir] (may Allāh be well pleased with him), say:

“I found myself in a truly critical predicament, due to the extremely high cost of living in Baghdād. I spent several days there without having any food to eat. As a matter of fact, I resorted to scavenging for bits of food that had been thrown away. On one particular day, since my hunger was terribly acute, I went out of town to the river bank, in the hope of finding some lettuce-leaves and herbs, and maybe some other foodstuffs dumped out there, on which I could nourish myself. I soon arrived at a likely spot, but only to find that others had beaten me to it. If I came across something worth picking up, I immediately found myself rubbing shoulders with a bunch of paupers, and I did not feel good about competing with them for the item concerned. I therefore retreated, walking through the center of the city, but I failed to notice any site where food had been dumped, apart from the one to which other folk had beaten me.

“By the time I arrived at a mosque [*masjid*] in the perfume-sellers’ bazaar, my hunger had reduced me to complete exhaustion, and I was simply too weak to stay on my feet any longer, so I entered the mosque and sat down to one side of it. Just when I was at the point of shaking hands with death, in came a young fellow, clearly a non-Arab, who brought with him a stick of bread and a helping of grilled meat. He sat down and started to eat, and each time he raised a morsel with his hand, I almost opened my mouth, my hunger being so intense. I managed to check myself, however, saying: “What is this? What have we here, except Allāh and whatever He has decreed in the way of death?” At that very moment, the young foreigner turned toward me, and noticed my presence. “In the Name of Allāh, O my brother,” he said [meaning, “Please share my meal with me!”], but I showed him no immediate reaction. He became insistent, however, so my appetite responded to his invitation, and I ate a few bites.

“He then started asking me questions, like: “What is your occupation? Where are you from? With whom are you well acquainted?” I answered by telling him: “As for my occupation,

I am an aspiring jurist [*mutafaqqih*]. As for where I am from, I am from Jilān." "Well I never," he exclaimed, "I am also from Jilān! Do you happen to know a young man, a fellow Jilānī, by the name of 'Abd al-Qādir?" "Yes indeed," said I, "for I am he!"

"This left him utterly dumbfounded, and his complexion became completely altered. "By Allāh, O my brother!" he gasped, as he began to tell me his tale: "When I arrived here in Baghdād, I still had some funds left over from my travel expenses, so I made enquiries about you. I met no one who could direct me to your whereabouts, and I eventually ran out of funds. For three days after reaching that point, I could not find the price of my basic sustenance, apart from something belonging to you, which I still had with me. When this day came, the third of the three, I finally said: 'I will soon have spent three whole days without eating any food, and that will mean that the Lawgiver [*Shāri'*] has given me permission to eat carrion [*maita*].'<sup>11</sup> I then took from your deposit the price of this bread and grilled meat. So eat and enjoy, for it actually belongs to you, while I am your guest, although it would appear to be mine, and you would seem to be my guest!"

"What on earth are you talking about?" I asked him, so he explained: "Your mother entrusted me with eight gold dinārs, for delivery to you, so I took enough out of them to pay for this meal. I am now referring to it as your own, as a way of apologizing for my having betrayed you, for I admit to feeling guilty, even if the Sacred Law [*Shar'*] does exonerate me, at least to a certain extent!"<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> As the Lawgiver (Almighty and Glorious is He) has told us in the Qur'ān:

He has forbidden to you only  
carrion, blood, the flesh of swine,  
and what has been hallowed  
to other than Allāh.  
But he who is driven by necessity,  
neither craving nor transgressing,  
it is no sin for him. Allāh is indeed  
All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.  
(2:173)

*inna-mā ḥarrama*  
*'alai-kumu 'l-maitata wa 'd-dama*  
*wa lahma 'l-khinziri wa mā*  
*uhilla bi-hi li-ghairi 'llāh:*  
*fa-mani 'ḍṭurra*  
*ghaira bāghin wa lā 'ādin*  
*fa-lā ithma 'alai-h:*  
*inna 'llāha Ghafūrur Raḥīm.*

<sup>12</sup> According to one of the most important principle of Islāmic jurisprudence (based on various legal sources, notably the Qur'ānic verse cited in note 11 above): "Dire necessities confer lawful status on things that are otherwise strictly forbidden [*inna 'ḍ-ḍarūrāta tuḥillu 'l-maḥzūrāt*]."

“I made him feel comfortable, and set his mind at rest. He really enjoyed the rest of our meal, which I gave him to him as a present. I also offered him part of the gold, so he accepted it and then went on his way.”

☞ A hungry Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir finds himself on a strange paper trail. ☞

As we are told by Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh as-Silmī: “I once heard our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir say: ‘I had spent several days there [in Baghdād] without finding any food to eat. Then, while I was in the quarter known as the Aristocratic Fiefdom [*al-Qaṭī‘at ash-Sharīfa*], I was suddenly approached by a man who thrust a bound sheaf of paper into my hand, before making an equally sudden departure. I kept the paper with me for awhile, as I strolled on through the streets, then I handed it over to one of the local grocers, in exchange for a cake of semolina, or maybe a mixture of dates and clarified butter. Then I went to an out-of-the-way mosque, in which I used to seek seclusion, in order to go over my lessons. I set the cake down in front of me, in the niche marking the *Qibla* [direction of the Ka‘ba in Mecca], while I pondered the question: “Shall I eat it, or not?”

“It was then that I noticed a rolled-up sheet of paper, in the shadow of the wall, so I picked it up and examined it. Lo and behold, it had these words written upon it: “In one of His earlier Books of Scripture, Allāh said:

What have the strong to do with passionate appetites? I have only assigned passionate appetites to the weak among the believers, so that they may use the energy they provide for acts of worshipful obedience.”

“I promptly picked up the handkerchief [in which the cake was wrapped], and left its contents in the niche marking the *Qibla*. I performed two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak‘atain*], and then off I went.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir finds relief from almost unbearable pressures, by repeating two verses from the Qur’ān.

**I**t was Shaikh Abū ‘Abd’illāh an-Najjār who said: “Our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir once told me: ‘I would sometimes feel the weight of many burdens, heavy enough to make the mountains disintegrate, if they had been laid upon them. So, when those pressures multiplied upon me, I would set my forehead on the ground, and say [in the words of the Qur’ān]:

So truly with hardship comes ease,  
*fa-inna ma‘a ‘l-‘usri yusrā:*

Truly with hardship comes ease.  
*inna ma‘a ‘l-‘usri yusrā. (94:5,6)*

“Then I would raise my head, and to my great relief, I would always find that those heavy pressures had been chased away from me.”

### ☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir experiences a spiritual crisis. ☞

Shaikh Abū ‘Abd’illāh an-Najjār went on to say: “He once told me: ‘During the time when I was engaged in the study of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], attending the classes held by the Shaikhs, I would go out into the desert, instead of lodging in Baghdād. I would sit in the wasteland by night and by day. I used to wear a *jubba*<sup>13</sup> made of wool [*ṣūf*], to cover my body, and on my head I wore a cap like a miniature tattered cloak [*khuraiqa*]. I used to stroll barefoot among the thorns and other hazards. For nourishment, I used to eat carob beans, plucked from the thornbushes, as well as vegetable waste and

<sup>13</sup> The *jubba* is a long outer garment, open at the front, with wide sleeves.

lettuce leaves, collected from the side of the stream and the bank of the river. If anything scared me at all, I would venture into it. I would subject my lower self [*nafs*] to strict discipline, until an unseen visitor [*ṭāriq*] came from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to visit me, and I would experience such visitations by night and by day. I would go into the desert, utter loud screams, and feel a glowing sensation on my face. My condition could only be diagnosed as a form of dumbness [*takhārus*] and insanity [*junūn*]. I was carried off to the hospital [*bīmāristān*], where I experienced strange states of being, until I died. Then they came to me with the shroud and the ritual washer of corpses, and set me on the washing bench to give me my final ablution. Then the visitation went away and left me.”



## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir meets al-Khiḍr, though without knowing who he is.

**I**t was Abu ‘s-Sa‘ūd al-Ḥuraimī who said: “I once heard our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), say:

“I stayed in the deserts and ruined areas of ‘Irāq for twenty-five years, as a solitary wanderer. I did not get to know my fellow creatures, and they did not get to know me. My only visitors were groups of the men belonging to the invisible realm [*ghaib*], as well as some of the jinn. I used to show them the way to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

“I was also escorted by al-Khiḍr<sup>14</sup> (peace be upon him), when I entered ‘Irāq for the very first time, though I did not then know who he was, and he stipulated that I must never contradict him. When we reached a certain spot, he said to me: “Sit down and stay here,” so I sat down and stayed where he told me to stay, for three whole years. He would come to see me once each year, and he would tell me: “Stay here in your place, until I come to you again!”

“The charms of this world, its ornaments, and its desires kept coming to me, in all their shapes and forms, but Allāh (Almighty and

<sup>14</sup> The alternative spelling *al-Khaḍir* means “the Green Man.” By either name, he is a popular figure, who plays a prominent part in Islāmic legends. According to some, he became green through diving into the spring of life. There is no agreement among the traditional authorities as to whether or not he should be counted as a Prophet [*Nabi*]. Some say that he lived in the time of Abraham (peace be upon him), some in the time of Noah (peace be upon him). His name does not actually appear in the Qur’ān, but nearly all the commentators agree that the mysterious person referred to in Q.18:59–81 is indeed al-Khiḍr. He is represented in those verses [*āyāt*] as the companion of Moses (peace be upon him). It is usually believed that he is still alive in the flesh and still to be seen in sacred places, such as Mecca and Jerusalem, and some maintain that he flies through the air and meets Elias (peace be upon him) at the dam of Alexandria and makes the pilgrimage with him every year. (See: T.P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 272–73, and A.J. Wensinck’s article AL-KHAḌIR in the *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*.)

Glorious is He) would always shield me from being influenced by their attraction. The devils [*shayāṭīn*] would also come to me in various disturbing guises, and they would engage me in combat, but Allāh would always strengthen me against them. My own lower self [*nafs*] would adopt a certain attitude toward me: at one time it would humbly beseech me to let it have what it wanted, then at another time it would engage in a fight with me, but Allāh would always help me to keep it under control. I took my lower self sternly to task, and whenever a particular method [*ṭarīq*] of spiritual discipline proved effective for this purpose, at an early stage, I would embrace it, grasp it firmly with both my hands, and continue to apply it on a regular basis.

“I stayed for a long period of time in the ruined areas of the big cities, taking my lower self sternly to task by applying the method [*ṭarīq*] of spiritual discipline. Thus I spent one year eating food from the dumps, without drinking any water, and one year drinking water. Then I spent a whole year drinking water, but without eating food from the dumps, and another year without eating, drinking, or sleeping. I did fall asleep once, in the Great Porch of Chosroes [*Īwān Kisrā*],<sup>15</sup> on a bitterly cold night. I experienced a seminal emission in my sleep, so I got up and went to the bank of the river, where I performed a major ritual ablution. In the course of that night, I experienced forty seminal emissions, and I performed the major ritual ablution forty times on the bank of the river. Then I climbed back up to the Porch, afraid of falling asleep yet again. I also stayed for two years in the ruins of al-Karkh [an ancient suburb of Baghdād], where my only source of nourishment was the papyrus plant [*barḍī*]. At the beginning of each year, a man would come to me with a *jubba*<sup>16</sup> made of wool.

“I entered into a thousand different states of being [*alf fann*], in order to obtain relief from this world of yours, and my condition could only be diagnosed as dumbness [*takhārus*], craziness [*balam*] and insanity [*junūn*]. I used to walk barefoot amid the thorns and

<sup>15</sup> Chosroes [*Kisrā*] was the title of the ancient kings of Persia, particularly those of the Sāsānid dynasty, whose rule was ended by the victorious invasion of the Muslim Arabs.

<sup>16</sup> See note 13 on p. 39 above.

other hazards. If anything scared me, I would venture straight into it. Never did my lower [*nafs*] prevail upon me, in the effort to get what it wanted, nor did anything ever seduce me with its worldly charm.'

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir covers an enormous distance, quite unaware that he is running at high speed. ☞

Shaikh 'Umar said: "I once heard our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), say: 'Spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] used to come upon me unexpectedly, in the early stage of my wandering, so I would adapt to them, take possession of them, and disappear into them, away from my ordinary existence. I would run at high speed, though quite unaware that I was doing so, and then, when the unusual condition left me, I would find myself in a place far removed from the place where I had been at the outset.

"On one such occasion, the spiritual state [*ḥāl*] came upon me while I was in the ruined area of Baghdād. I ran for the space of an hour, quite unaware that I was running. When I recovered my normal consciousness, I found myself in the region of Shashtar, where the distance between me and Baghdād was that of a twelve-day journey. As I stood there, reflecting on my situation, a woman came up to me and said: "Does this really strike you as something surprising, when you are none other than Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir?"

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir struggles with devil armies, with Iblīs himself, and with his own lower self [*nafs*]. ☞

It was Shaikh 'Uthmān aṣ-Ṣirāfīnī who said: "I once heard our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), say:

"I used to sit in the ruined areas by night and by day, and I did not take a lodging in Baghdād. The devils used to come to me in ranks,

in the guise of men bearing weapons of various kinds, and assuming the most alarming shapes and forms. They would engage me in combat, pelting me with fire. Yet even in the face of these terrifying assaults, I would find within my heart an inexpressible sense of reassurance. I would hear a voice saying, from somewhere deep inside: “Stand up and attack them, O ‘Abd al-Qādir, for We have already reinforced your strength, and We have come to your support with Our invincible assistance!” Sure enough, as soon as I launched a resolute attack against them, they would flee away to right and left, returning to wherever they had come from.

“Then a single devil [*shaiṭān*] would come to me from amongst them, all by himself, and he would say to me: “Go away from here, or else I shall do this, and I shall do that.” He would warn me of many dreadful consequences, so I would slap him with my hand, and he would flee away from me. I would then say: “There is no might and no strength, except with Allāh, the All-High, the All-Glorious [*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi’llāhi ’l-‘Aliyyi ’l-‘Aẓīm*],” and he would be consumed by fire, as I watched him burn.

“On one occasion, I was approached by figure whose appearance was utterly repugnant, and who had a disgusting stench about him. “I am Iblīs,”<sup>17</sup> said he, “and I have come to you in order to act as your servant, for you have thwarted all my efforts, and you have thwarted all the efforts of my followers.” I said to him: “Go away, for I do not trust you.” At that very moment, a hand came down from above him and struck him on the skull, with such force that he plunged right into the ground.

“Then he came to me a second time, holding in his hand a dart of fire, with which he attacked me. Just in the nick of time, a man wearing a veil rode up to me on a gray mare, and handed me a sword. Iblīs immediately beat a quick retreat.

<sup>17</sup> Iblīs is the personal name of the Devil. Some Western scholars consider it to be an arabicized version of the Greek *diabolos*, but the Arab philologists derive it from the root *b-l-s*, on the grounds that Iblīs “has nothing to expect [*ubliša*] from the mercy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).” He is also called *ash-Shaiṭān* [Satan, the Devil], *‘aduww Allāh* [the enemy of God] or simply *al-‘aduww* [the Enemy]. Unlike the English word Satan, however, *ash-Shaiṭān* is not strictly speaking a proper name, as A.J. Wensinck points out in his article IBLĪS in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*. (See also: T.P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, art. DEVIL).

“When I saw him a third time, he was sitting at some distance from me, shedding tears and heaping dust on his head, as he said: “I have totally despaired of you, O ‘Abd al-Qādir!” I responded to this by telling him: “Be off with you, O accursed one, for I shall never cease to be on my guard against you!” He said: “This is far more agonizing than the grappling irons [*maqāmi*’]<sup>18</sup> of the torment of Hell!”

“I was then made witness to the disclosure of many snares, traps and illusions, so I said: “What are these?” and I was told: “These are the snares of this world, which Iblis sets to catch the likes of you.” So I chased him off with angry words, and he turned away in flight.

“I devoted one whole year to addressing the problems posed by those snares and traps, until I had found solutions to them all. Then I was made witness to the disclosure of many influences, affecting me from every direction, so I said: “What are these?” and I was told: “These are the influences exerted on you by your fellow creatures, and you are affected by them.” I therefore devoted another year to tackling the problems posed by those influences, until I had found solutions to them all, and achieved detachment from them.

“Next, I was made witness to the disclosure of my own inner content [*bāṭin*], and I saw that my heart was dependent on many attachments. “What are these?” I enquired, and I was told: “These are your self-will [*irāda*] and your personal preferences [*ikhtiyārāt*].” I therefore devoted another year to tackling the problems posed by those factors, until I had found solutions to them all, and my heart was safely delivered from them.

“Then I was made witness to yet another disclosure, this one concerning my lower self [*nafs*]. I could see that its sicknesses were still thriving, its passionate desire was still alive, and its devil was still rebellious, so I devoted another year to tackling that state of affairs.

<sup>18</sup> An allusion to the verses [*āyāt*] of the Qur’ān:

But as for those who disbelieve,  
garments of fire will be cut out  
for them; boiling fluid will be  
poured down on their heads,  
whereby that which is in their bellies,  
and their skins too, will be melted; and  
for them are hooked rods of iron.  
(22:19–21)

*fa-’lladhīna kafarū*  
*quṭṭi’at la-hum thiyābun*  
*min nār: yuṣabbu min fawqi*  
*ru’ūsī-him ḥamīm.*  
*yuzharu bi-hi mā*  
*fi buṭūni-him wa ’l-julūd.*  
*wa la-hum maqāmi’u min ḥadīd.*

The sicknesses of my lower self were thereby cured, the passion died, the devil surrendered, and the whole affair became the business of Allāh (Exalted is He). I was left in a state of isolation, with all existence [*wujūd*] behind me, and I had not yet arrived at my goal.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir passes by many attractive but overcrowded gates, then finally enters the gate of poverty [*faqr*].<sup>19</sup> ☞

“I was therefore attracted to the gate of absolute trust in the Lord [*tawakkul*],<sup>20</sup> through which I might enter to reach my goal. As soon as I came to that gate, I found a huge crowd milling around it, so I moved on past it. Then I was attracted to the gate of thankfulness [*shukr*],<sup>21</sup> through which I might enter to reach my goal. At this gate too, I encountered a huge crowd, so I moved on past it. I was then attracted to the gate of affluence [*ghinā*], through which I might enter to reach my goal. Here again, I encountered a huge crowd, so I moved on past it. I was then attracted to the gate of nearness [*qurb*], through which I might enter to reach my goal. As before, I encountered a huge crowd, so I moved on past it. Then I was attracted to the gate of direct vision [*mushāhada*], through which I might enter to reach my goal. That gate was likewise surrounded by a huge crowd, so I moved on past it.

“I was next attracted to the gate of poverty [*faqr*], and lo and behold, it was quite empty! When I entered inside it, I rediscovered everything that I had left behind. The greatest treasure was laid open to me there, and I came upon the mightiest splendor, wealth everlasting, and pure freedom. All relics of the past were obliterated, all previous attributes were annulled, and the second ecstasy [*wajd*] arrived.”

<sup>19</sup> For Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s detailed treatment of the subject of spiritual poverty [*faqr*], including the modes of conduct proper to the spiritual pauper [*faqīr*], see Vol. 5, pp. 55–71 of the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above.

<sup>20</sup> In the work referred to in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has devoted an illuminating section to the subject of absolute trust in the Lord [*tawakkul*]. (See Vol. 5 of the Al-Baz edition, pp. 114–25.)

<sup>21</sup> For Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s detailed treatment of the subject of thankfulness [*shukr*], see Vol. 5, pp. 132–39 of the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir hears an unseen speaker urging him to apply for a loan. ☞

It was Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Jubbā’ī who said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir once told me: ‘I was sitting one day on a spot in the desert, going over my lessons in Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. I found it difficult to concentrate on my studies at that time, since I was suffering great hardship due to poverty. Suddenly, I heard someone speaking to me, though I could not see his physical form. He said: “You should borrow enough to help you in the study of jurisprudence,” or maybe he used the expression, “the pursuit of knowledge.” To this I responded by saying: “How can I expect to get a loan, when I am a pauper, and have no means of paying it back?” He then said: “You just do the borrowing, and we shall accept responsibility for settling the debt incurred.” I thereupon went to a man who sold groceries, and I said to him: “I must ask you to do business with me on the following terms: Whenever Allāh makes things easy for me, I shall give you [what I owe you], and if I die, you will consider me clear of any obligation. Each day, you will give me one whole loaf of bread, as well as some garden cress [*rashād*] in another half-loaf.”

“As soon as he heard my proposal, the grocer burst into tears, and he said: “O my master, I am entirely at your disposal, whatever you may wish!” He insisted on treating me as if he was my servant, so I used to receive from him, each and every day, one whole loaf of bread and some garden cress in another half-loaf. I kept this up for a certain period of time, but a day came when I felt a pain in my breast, because of my inability to give him anything. At that point I heard myself told: “Go to such-and-such place, and whatever you happen to see there, lying on the pile of rubble, take it and hand it over to the grocer,” or the invisible speaker may have used the expression, “settle your debt with it.” When I went to that place as instructed, I noticed a big chunk of gold on the pile of rubble, so I picked it up and gave it to the grocer.”

☞ At harvest time in a rural area on the outskirts of Baghdād, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir meets a righteous man called ash-Sharīf al-Ba‘qūbī. ☞

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir also told me: ‘A group from the people of Baghdād were among those engaged in the study of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. When the days of crop-harvesting came around, they used to go out into the rural area near the city, with a view to gathering some part of the harvest. They said to me one day: “Come out with us to Ba‘qūbā, so that we can collect something from there.” I was still a young man, so I went out with them.

“In Ba‘qūbā there was a righteous man, called ash-Sharīf al-Ba‘qūbī, so I went to pay him a visit. He said to me: “Those who are seekers of the Truth, and the righteous, do not beg for anything from the people,” and he forbade me to beg from the people. After that, I never went out to any such place again.’

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir experiences a spiritual state, and scares the local vagabonds out of their wits. ☞

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir also said: ‘A spiritual state [*ḥāl*] came upon me one night, quite unexpectedly, so I uttered a really loud scream. The local vagabonds [*‘ayyārūn*] heard me, and they were scared out of their wits, fearing the presence of armed guards [*masāliḥa*], so they came and stood over me, as I lay sprawled out on the ground. They recognized me, and said: “This is ‘Abd al-Qādir, the lunatic [*majnūn*]. Hey there, you gave us a terrible fright. May Allāh not remember you kindly!”’”<sup>22</sup>

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir decides to leave Baghdād, but an unseen speaker stops him at the Racetrack Gate, and orders him to return. ☞

Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Jubbā’ī also said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once told me: ‘It occurred to

<sup>22</sup> *Author’s note:* The word ‘*ayyārūn*’ is the plural of ‘*ayyār*’, which is a colloquial term for someone who keeps loitering to and fro. In this particular context, the reference is probably to petty thieves. As for the word spelled *mīm-ṣād-lām-ḥā’-tā’ marbūṭa*, it is pronounced *masāliḥa*, and probably signifies watchmen on guard duty, because they were equipped with weaponry [*aṣḥāb silāḥ*]. Allāh knows best, of course.

me that I should leave the city of Baghdād, because it contained so many trials and temptations, so I took my copy of the Qurʾān [*maṣḥaf*] and hung it over my shoulder. Then I walked to the Racetrack Gate [*Bāb al-Ḥalba*], intending to go out through it into the desert. Just as I was about to do so, however, I heard someone saying to me: “Where are you strolling off to?” The speaker gave me a shove, so hard that I toppled to the ground. I suppose he was standing there over my back, as I heard him say: “You must return at once, for the people derive benefit from your presence in their city.” To this I responded by saying: “What obligation do I bear toward my fellow creatures? I am only seeking to ensure the integrity of my religion [*salāma dīnī*].” He said: “Go back, and the integrity of your religion will be ensured for you.” I never saw the physical form of the speaker.

☞ As if in answer to a prayer, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is greeted by a stranger, who turns out to be none other than Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās. ☞

“Then, not long after that, I experienced the visitation by night of spiritual states [*aḥwāl*], which I found difficult to understand, so I wished that Allāh would provide me with someone who could disclose their meaning to me. When the next day came, I passed through the quarter known as al-Muẓaffariyya, where a man opened the door of his house, and said to me: “O ‘Abd al-Qādir, come over here!” So I went and stood in front of him, and he said: “What were you looking for yesterday evening?” Or maybe the words he used were: “What did you ask of Allāh during the night?” I kept silent, not knowing what I should say, so he became exasperated with me. He slammed the door in my face, with a truly mighty slam, so that the dust from the edges of the door flew straight into my face.

“Then, when I had walked on a little way, I remembered what I had asked of Allāh, and it occurred to me that he might well be one of the righteous [*ṣāliḥīn*] (or the Shaikh may have said: ‘one of the saints [*awliyā’*]’), so I went back and tried to find the door. I could not identify it anywhere, so I felt a painful tightness in my breast.

I did eventually recognize the door, and that man turned out to be none other than Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās. I became his pupil, and he unveiled for me the significance of what I had found so hard to understand.

“When I was absent from him for some time, in the pursuit of knowledge, and then returned to him, he would say to me: “What has you brought back here to us? You are an expert jurist [*faqīh*], so go off and join your fellow jurists [*fuqahā*]!” I would keep silent, while he spoke to me in a seriously hurtful and offensive manner, and lashed me with his tongue. On another occasion, when I was absent from him in the pursuit of knowledge, and then came to see him again, he might say: “Today we received a large delivery of bread and honey-cake [*fālūdḥaj*], and we ate our fill, but we did not keep anything at all for you.”

“His companions were keen to see me arrive, because they noticed how often he offended me, and they would get a thrill out of saying things like: “You are supposed to be a jurist [*faqīh*], so what are you doing here?” or, “Whatever brings you here to us?” But then, as soon as he saw them trying to hurt me, Shaikh Ḥammād would spring zealously to my defense, and he would say to them: “O you dogs, you must not hurt his feelings! By Allāh, there is not a single one like him amongst you. When I try to offend him, I only do so in order to test his mettle, for I see him as a mountain that cannot be shaken.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ In order to accommodate the ever-growing numbers in attendance, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is obliged to move his session [*majlis*] from one site to another. ☞

It was also Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Jubbā’ī who said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once told me:

“I used to utter commands and prohibitions, in my sleep as well as when I was awake. Speech would arise in me spontaneously, with overwhelming urgency, and it would exert a great pressure on my heart. If I did not speak out, I would almost choke to death, and I simply could not keep silent. Two or three men used to sit in my

company, listening to my speech, then the word got around among the people, and my fellow creatures began to crowd around me.

“I used to sit in the place reserved for prayer [*maṣallā*] by the Racetrack Gate [*Bāb al-Ḥalba*], but then that space became too cramped to accommodate the throngs of people, so they removed the lectern, and installed it inside the sandy plots of land between the clay-lined pits used as baking ovens. The people used to come there in the nighttime, finding places for themselves by the light of candles and torches. Then, when that space also became too constricted to accommodate all the people, the lectern was transported to a place outside the city, where it was installed in the area set aside for prayer. The people would ride out there on horses, mules, donkeys and camels, then they would use their beasts as elevated couches, while they attended to whatever transpired in the session [*majlis*]. The number of those present at the session was usually in the region of seventy thousand.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) appears to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and spits seven times into his mouth. ☞

[According to Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Jubbā’ī]: “Our teacher [*ustādh*], Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also said: ‘I once saw Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) before the time of the midday prayer [*ẓuhr*], and he said to me: “O my dear son, why do you not speak out?” So I replied: “O dear father, I am a non-Arab man. How can I speak fluently in the classical Arabic language of Baghdād?” He then told me: “Just open your mouth!” So I opened it wide, and he spat into it seven times. Then he told me: “You must speak to the people, and summon them to the way of your Lord, with wisdom and good counsel.” I then performed the midday prayer [*ẓuhr*], and remained seated after it. Many people gathered in my company, but I was at a loss for words.

“It was then that I caught sight of ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and he said: “Open your mouth!” So I opened it wide,

and he spat into it six times. “Why do you not complete the full seven spits?” I asked him, and he explained: “As a matter of good manners, in relation to the Messenger of Allāh.” Then he vanished from my sight. I said to myself: “The diver of the mind dives deep into the ocean of the heart, to gather the pearls of those insights that can only be obtained by direct experience [*durar al-ma‘ārif*]. Then, when he has brought them out onto the shore of the breast, a commercial agent [*simsār*] summons the tongue’s translator [*tarjumān*] to interpret their worth, and so they come to be traded for extremely precious and costly items. How excellent is worshipful obedience in houses which Allāh has allowed to be constructed!” He also recited the poetic verse:

For the like of Laylā, a man could kill himself, and to him  
the bitter pills of death would taste delightfully sweet.”<sup>23</sup>

In some of the manuscript texts at my disposal, I have noticed that the Shaikh is quoted as saying:

“In the depth of my innermost being [*sirr*], I received the instruction: ‘O ‘Abd al-Qādir, you must enter Baghdād and speak to the people there!’ I therefore entered Baghdād, where I saw the people in a condition that did not appeal to me at all, so I went back out from amongst them. Again I heard the call: ‘O ‘Abd al-Qādir, you must enter the city and speak to the people there, for they will derive great benefit from your presence!’ This time I responded by saying: ‘What have I to do with the people? The integrity of my religion [*dīn*] is what is really important to me.’ I was then told: ‘Go back there, and the integrity of your religion will be guaranteed.’

“I received seventy firm assurances from my Lord, to the effect that He would not subject me to cunning devices, and that no pupil

<sup>23</sup> In the Forty-first Discourse of *The Sublime Revelation* [*al-Faḥḥ ar-Rabbānī*] Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has given us this beautiful version of the story of Majnūn and his love for Laylā:

Your Beloved will expel from your heart all creatures between the heavenly Throne and the surface of the earth, so you will love neither this world nor the hereafter. You will be estranged from you, and feel at home with Him. You will come to resemble Laylā’s Majnūn, who was so obsessed with love for her that he shunned his fellow creatures and preferred to live in isolation, having only the wild animals for company. He left civilization behind and preferred to be in desolate places. He moved away from the praise and blame of people. Their speech and their silence became one and the same to him; it was all the same to him whether they viewed him with favor or with displeasure. One day he was asked: “Who are you?” “Laylā,” said he. He was blind to everything apart from her, and deaf to hearing any speech but hers. He would not give her up because of any kind of criticism.

[*murīd*] of mine would die, except in a state of repentance. I then returned to Baghdād, where I delivered speeches to the people. I saw lights ablaze, and they were moving toward me, so I said: 'What spiritual state is this, and what is the story behind it?' I was given the explanation: 'Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is coming toward you, for the purpose of congratulating you on that which Allāh has bestowed upon you.' Then the lights become more numerous and shone even brighter, and the spiritual state came upon me, so I staggered and swayed to and fro in a rapture of sheer delight.

☞ A somewhat different version of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's meeting with the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and 'Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him). ☞

"I caught sight of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), in front of the pulpit, up in the air. 'O 'Abd al-Qādir!' he said to me, so I took seven steps through the air, rejoicing in the presence of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). He spat seven times into my mouth, then 'Alī appeared to me after him, and spat into my mouth three times. When I asked 'Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him): 'Why did you not spit as many times as the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace)?' he explained: 'As a matter of good manners in his company.' Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) then conferred upon me a robe of honor, so I said: 'What is this?' and he told me: 'This is the robe of honor marking your sainthood [*wilāya*], and indicating specifically the status of Cardinality [*Quṭbiyya*] in relation to the saints [*awliyā'*].' My true rôle was thus disclosed to me, so I made it my business to speak to the people.

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir is examined by al-Khiḍr (peace be upon him), to whom he gives a surprising response. ☞

"Abu 'l-'Abbās al-Khiḍr<sup>24</sup> (peace be upon him) came to put me through an examination, as he had examined the saints [*awliyā'*]

<sup>24</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

before me. He disclosed to me the secret content [*sarīra*] of his being, as he provided me with insights into the subjects I raised with him. Then I said to him, while he bowed his head in silence: ‘O Khiḍr, if it is true that you used to say to Moses: “You will never be able to have patience with me,” I can tell you, O Khiḍr, that you will never be able to have patience with me! You are an Israelite [*Isrā’īlī*], whereas I am a Muḥammadan [*Muḥammadī*]. Here we are, you and I, and this is the polo-ball, and this is the arena.<sup>25</sup> This is Muḥammad, and this is the All-Merciful [*ar-Raḥmān*]. This is my horse, all saddled and bridled. My bow is strung tight, and my sword is unsheathed.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ In the course of delivering a public lecture,  
Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir suddenly strides  
through the air. ☞

It was al-Khaṭṭāb, the personal servant of our master, Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: “One day, while the Shaikh was giving a talk to the people, he suddenly took several steps through the air, and he exclaimed: ‘O Israelite [*yā Isrā’īlī*], stop and listen to the speech of the Muḥammadan [*Muḥammadī*]!’ Then he returned to his place. When asked to explain what had happened, he said: ‘Abu ’l-‘Abbās al-Khiḍr (peace be upon him) was up there, about to pass us by, so I stepped up toward him, and said to him what you heard me say, and he came to a halt.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

<sup>25</sup> The game of polo was a popular sport in ‘Irāq, and, in his discourses, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) frequently drew upon it for the sake of analogy. For instance, in the Third Discourse of *Revelations of the Unseen* [*Futūḥ al-Ghaib*], the Shaikh says:

Since he now sees nothing but the Truth [*al-Ḥaqq*] in action..., his status comes to resemble that of a ball on the receiving end of a polo-player’s mallet—rolled and spun and knocked around, though inert in itself and imparting no motion to other bodies.

## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir describes twelve special qualities that must become firmly established in the character of a Shaikh.

Our master and our exemplary guide toward Allāh (Exalted is He), Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, once said: ‘It is not permissible for the Shaikh to sit on the prayer rug [*sajjāda*] of the ultimate stage of spiritual development, nor to gird himself with the sword of total reliance on providential care [*‘ināya*], until twelve special qualities have ripened in him to complete perfection. Two of these qualities are from Allāh (Exalted is He), two of them are from the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), two are from Abū Bakr (may Allāh be well pleased with him), two are from ‘Umar (may Allāh be well pleased with him), two are from ‘Uthmān (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and the other two are from ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him).<sup>26</sup>

- As for the two qualities that are from Allāh (Exalted is He), a person who is endowed with them will always be ready to pardon [*sattār*], always ready to forgive [*ghaffār*].

- As for the two that are from the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), a person who is endowed with them will be sympathetic [*shafīq*] and kind [*rafīq*].

- As for the two that are from Abū Bakr (may Allāh be well pleased with him), a person who is endowed with them will be both truthful [*ṣādiq*] and charitable [*mutaṣaddiq*].

<sup>26</sup> In the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has provided significant accounts of the Caliphates of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with them all). (See Vol. 1, pp. 256–64, of the Al-Baz edition.)

•As for the two that are from ‘Umar (may Allāh be well pleased with him), a person who is endowed with them will be active in commanding [what is right and fair] [*ammār*] and active in forbidding [what is wrong and unfair] [*nahhā’*].<sup>27</sup>

•As for the two that are from ‘Uthmān (may Allāh be well pleased with him), a person who is endowed with them will be an active provider of food [*miṭ‘ām*], and one who is devoted to praying [*muṣallī*] at night, when the rest of the people are sound asleep.

•As for the two that are from ‘Ali (may Allāh be well pleased with him), a person who is endowed with them will be both learned [‘*ālīm*] and courageous [*shujā’*].’

☞ Some verses of poetry attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, followed by other sayings concerning the qualifications of a Shaikh. ☞

“Here are a few of the poetic verses [*abyāt*] that have been attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

There must be five virtues inherent in the Shaikh,  
or else he is a mere imposter, leading only to stupidity.  
He must be outwardly well versed in the rules of the Sacred Law,  
while deeply rooted in the study of the science of Reality.  
He must be humble in word and deed when relating to the needy,  
and always greet newcomers with a welcome and hospitality.  
Such is the Shaikh whose worth is outstanding.  
He is well versed in the rules of unlawfulness and permissibility.  
He trains the seekers of the Path, as one who has  
himself been trained, complete in his noble generosity.<sup>28</sup>

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also said: ‘In order to be a worthy guide to spiritual progress [*sulūk*], a person must possess the following qualifications: He must be thoroughly

<sup>27</sup> See note 3 on p. 28 above.

<sup>28</sup> How exactly should we reckon the count of five? Perhaps as follows: (1) Thorough knowledge of the rules of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*], also referred to as the rules of unlawfulness [*ḥarām*] and permissibility [*ḥill*]; (2) profound study of the science of Reality [*‘ilm al-Ḥaqīqa*]; (3) a humble attitude toward the poor and needy; (4) a welcoming and hospitable attitude toward newcomers; and (5) submitting one’s own self [*nafs*] to spiritual training, before training other seekers of the Path [*Tariq*]. Allāh knows best what the Shaikh intended—may Allāh be pleased with him!

familiar with the legal and medical sciences [*al-ʿulūm ash-sharʿiyya wa ʿṭ-ṭibbiyya*], and approved by the Ṣūfī masters. There can be no dispensing with that.”

“The leader of the spiritual community [*sayyid at-tāʿifa*] and its Shaikh, al-Junaid<sup>29</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), once said: “Our knowledge [*ʿilm*] is strictly in accordance with the Book and the Sunna. If someone does not memorize the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*], and also record it in writing; if he does not memorize the Mighty and Glorious Book; if he does not master the jurisprudence of religion [*yatafaqqah fi ʿd-dīn*], and the terminology of spiritual culture [*muṣṭalaḥ aṣ-ṣūfiyya*—that person is not worthy to be followed as a guide. May Allāh be well pleased with those whose guidance is worthy of being followed!”

“Speaking for myself, I would say that what is required of the Shaikh, in the process of training the seeker [*murīd*], is that he must first of all accept him [as his pupil] for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not for his own sake, and not for any ulterior motive. Then he must relate to him on the basis of sincere advice [*naṣīḥa*], and regard him with the eye of tender loving care.<sup>30</sup>

“He must treat his pupil with gentle kindness, when he finds it hard to cope with rigorous exercise [*riyāḍa*], for he must train him as a mother trains her child, and as a gentle, wise and understanding father trains his son and his servant. He must therefore set him fairly easy tasks, and not burden him beyond his capacity.

“Then, before setting him more difficult tests, the Shaikh must exact from him the solemn commitment to forsake all acts of sinful disobedience, and to remain steadfast in worshipful obedience to

<sup>29</sup>Abu ʿl-Qāsim al-Junaid ibn Muḥammad al-Khazzāz al-Qawārīrī an-Nihāwandī (d. A.H. 298/910 C.E.) was a nephew of Sarī as-Saqāṭī, and became a close associate of al-Muḥāsibī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon them). Renowned for the clarity of his perception and the firmness of his self-control, he earned a reputation as the principal exponent of the “sober” school of Islāmic mysticism. Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) quotes many of his sayings, and relates many stories about him. For instance, in the Sixty-second Discourse of *The Sublime Revelation* [*al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī*] (pp. 484–85 of the Al-Baz edition), we are told:

Al-Junaid (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) never tired of saying: “What do I care about me? The slave and all he possesses belong to his Master [*Mawlā*].”

<sup>30</sup> It is interesting to note that this paragraph and the next occur also (with only a few minor differences in the wording) in the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, where they form part of the section headed: “Concerning what is required of the Shaikh in the process of training the seeker [*murīd*].” (See Vol. 5, p. 39, of the Al-Baz edition.)

Allāh (Exalted is He). This commitment is a basic essential, for, as reported in the noble Traditions [*Aḥādīth*], it was demanded by the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) when he accepted the oath of allegiance from the Companions (may Allāh be well pleased with them all). There is no need for anything to be specifically quoted from these reports, however, nor for the Shaikh to instruct him to remember the chain of transmission [*silsila*].

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir tells how the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) taught ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be well pleased with him) the basic lesson concerning the remembrance [*dhikr*] of Allāh (Exalted is He). ☞

“‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once asked the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace): “Which of the methods [*ṭuruq*] is nearest to Allāh, easiest for His servants, and most meritorious in His sight?” The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) replied: “O ‘Alī, you must make it your constant practice to remember Allāh (Exalted is He) in private moments and places.” ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then went on to say: “Can such be the merit of remembrance [*dhikr*], when all the people are remembering all the time [since they frequently exclaim ‘Allāh!’]?” “This is no light matter, O ‘Alī,” said the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), “for the Final Hour will not arise, so long as there is still someone, somewhere on the face of the earth, who is saying: ‘Allāh, Allāh!’”

“This prompted ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) to ask: “How should I practice remembrance?” So the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) told him: “Listen to what I say three times, then you say it three times, while I do the listening.” Then he said (Allāh bless him and give him peace): “*Lā ilāha illa ’llāh* [There is no god but Allāh]”—three times, closing his eyes and raising his voice—while ‘Alī listened. Then ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said: “*Lā ilāha illa ’llāh* [There is no god but Allāh]”—three times, closing his eyes and raising his voice—while the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) listened in turn.

“This is therefore the basic lesson concerning the remembrance of Allāh (Exalted is He), namely: the statement expressing the affirmation of Divine Oneness [*kalimat at-Tawḥīd*]. We beg Allāh (Exalted is He) to enable us to perform it.”

“Our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: ‘If a person has not learned the noble remembrance [*dhikr*], which consists of the affirmation of Divine Oneness [*tawḥīd*], from a Shaikh who is a qualified instructor [*murshid*], connected by spiritual lineage to the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), that person is unlikely to invoke it when the need for it arises, at the time when death is about to strike.’ This explains why the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would often recite the poetic verse:

How sweet is the flavor of that repetition and reaffirmation!  
May it not desert me when this world bids me farewell!

“I also heard him recite these verses<sup>31</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

If a man attempts to develop himself by using his own will,  
he is building a structure on something other than its true foundation.

If a someone is not reared by the men [of the spiritual path], and is not given  
to drink that milk of theirs, which flows from the udder of sanctity—

That person is a foundling, lacking the bonds of family relationship,  
and he will never outdistance any but the sons of his own kind.

If a man does not take to wearing a garment of pure devotion,  
at the hand of a teacher who knows his own self full well—

The follies and wiles of the lower selves will see him as a target,  
and even that which is screened from him will easily detect him by sense.

He will never experience ecstasy at the hand of an exemplary guide,  
nor will the favors of grace protect him, since he does not wear that gown.

No mystery will be revealed to him from the secret recess of his being,  
nor will the cups be displayed to him in the intimate state of communion.

He will not improve in form and moral character and competence,  
nor will his estate bear fruit through the ripening of his plantation.

<sup>31</sup> In the original Arabic version of this poem, each of the ten verses [*abyāt*] ends with the rhyme ...*si-hi*, thus: *ussi-hi—qudsi-hi—jinsi-hi—nafsi-hi—ḥissi-hi—labsi-hi—uns-hi—ghirsi-hi—‘aksi-hi—jinsi-hi*. As the reader will notice, the translator has not attempted to reproduce this effect in English!

That, by my life, is someone deprived of good fortune, a failure,  
someone who seeks a path, but only to head in the opposite direction.

May the principles of our people make this but a rare occurrence,  
and if someone comes with false intent, let him go with his own kind!

“The Shaikhs were constantly coming to visit him. They held him  
in the highest esteem, and they always behaved with the best of good  
manners in his company, while attending his session [*majlis*].

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”



## The blessed state of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s pupils [*murīdūn*], and of his pupils’ pupils, through seven stages of succession.

As for his pupils [*murīdūn*], they are too many to be counted. They are the blissfully happy ones in this world and the Hereafter. Not one of them will die without being in a state of repentance [*tauba*].<sup>32</sup> His pupils’ pupils, through seven stages of succession, will enter the Garden of Paradise.”

It was Shaikh ‘Alī al-Gharthanī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once told me: ‘I asked Mālik, the custodian of the Fire of Hell: “Do you have any single one of my companions in your custody?” Mālik said: “No, by Allāh’s Might and Glory!”’ The Shaikh went on to say: ‘My hand over my pupils is like the sky over the earth. If one of my pupils is not perfectly fine, whereas I am perfectly fine—by the Might and Glory of my Lord!—my feet will not move from standing in the presence of my Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), until He transports me, and all of you, to the Garden of Paradise!’”

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was once asked: ‘What view would you take of a man who called himself a Qādiri, though without receiving instruction from you, and without wearing a tattered robe [*khirqā*]<sup>33</sup> conferred by you? Would he

<sup>32</sup> See note 10 on p. 34 above.

<sup>33</sup> In the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has made several interesting comments on various customs connected with the *khirqā* [tattered robe, or patched cloak]. (See Vol. 5, pp. 80–85, of the Al-Baz edition.)

actually be counted as one of your companions?’ To this the Shaikh replied: ‘If someone adopts my name [by calling himself a Qādirī], or otherwise professes his affiliation to me, Allāh (Exalted is He) will accept him, even if he happens to be on a reprehensible course, for he is a member of the troop of my companions.’

☞ Merciful relief from torment after death, for any Muslim who ever crossed the threshold of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s schoolhouse door. ☞

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also said: ‘For any Muslim who steps across the threshold of my schoolhouse door, the torment of the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*] will be alleviated.’

“A man from among the people of Baghdād once came and said to him: ‘O my master, my father is dead and gone, but I saw him last night in my dream, and he mentioned to me that he was suffering dreadful torment in his grave. “O my dear son,” he said to me, “you must go to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and ask him to offer a prayer of supplication [*du‘ā*] on my behalf.”’ On hearing this, the Shaikh said to the man: ‘Did your father ever cross the threshold of my schoolhouse door?’ The answer was yes, and nothing more was said. Then the man paid him a second visit, the very next day, and told him: ‘O my master, I saw my father again last night, but this time he was laughing merrily, and he was dressed in a fine green outfit. He said to me: “The agonizing torment has been lifted from me, through the blessed grace of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and, as you can see, I now have a fine suit of clothes to wear! So, my son, you must make sure that you stay very close to him from now on.”’

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then said: ‘My Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) has promised me that He will alleviate the torment for everyone, from among the Muslims, who has ever stepped across the threshold of my schoolhouse door.’

“He was told that the shrieks and screams of a dead man could be heard from a grave, in the burial ground by the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Aṣaj*], so he said: ‘Did he ever wear a tattered robe [*khirqā*],

conferred on him by me?' The answer was: 'We do not know,' so he went on to ask: 'Did he ever attend my session [*majlis*]?' Again they said: 'That we do not know,' so he said: 'Did he ever perform the ritual prayer behind me?' Yet again, they told him: 'We do not know,' so he said: 'The negligent is more deserving of loss!' He bowed his head in silence for a while, for a sense of awe had alighted upon him, and a feeling of gravity had overwhelmed him. Then he raised his head, and declared: 'The angels (peace be upon them all) have just told me: "[That man in the grave] did once see your face, and he formed a good opinion of you, and Allāh (Exalted is He) has bestowed His mercy upon him because of you" (or, "because of that").' No more shrieking and screaming was heard from him after that, through the blessed grace of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him)."

☞ The companions of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās are puzzled by the droning sound he makes during the night, so they ask Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir to seek an explanation from him. ☞

It was Shaikh Abu 'n-Najīb 'Abd al-Qāhir as-Suhrawardī<sup>34</sup> (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: "A droning sound, like the droning of bees, could be heard every night, in the vicinity of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās. His companions said to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, one day in the year [A.H.] 508, when he was present in his company: 'Ask him about that!' So he asked him, and Shaikh Ḥammād told him: 'I have twelve thousand pupils, and I mention them all by their names every night. I beg Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to attend to the need of each and every one of them. If a pupil of mine is smitten so hard by a sin, that the appetite for it will not become exhausted, I ask Him to relent toward him, and to tolerate with compassion his persistence in that condition.'

<sup>34</sup> Shaikh Ḍiyā' ad-Dīn Abu 'n-Najīb 'Abd al-Qāhir as-Suhrawardī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was born in A.H. 490/1097 C.E. As a youth, he left his native Suhraward for Baghdād, and there, like Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) he studied Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] and related subjects. He received some training from Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās, but his principal guide to the Spiritual Path was Shaikh Aḥmad al-Ghazālī. He died in A.H. 563/1168 C.E.

“On hearing this, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir said: ‘If Allāh (Exalted is He) grants me a station of honor in His sight, I shall obtain from my Lord (Blessed and Exalted is He) a covenant on behalf of my pupils, binding until the Day of Resurrection, to the effect that not one of them will die without being in a state of repentance, and that I must be a guarantor for them in that regard.’ Shaikh Ḥammād then said: ‘I bear witness that Allāh will surely grant him that commitment, and that he will spread the shade of his noble dignity over them.

“May Allāh be well pleased with them all.”

☞ Hundreds of saintly Shaikhs in distant countries regard Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir as their exemplary guide. ☞

‘Abdu’llāh al-Jubbā’ī once said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir had a pupil called ‘Umar al-Ḥalāwī. He left Baghdād and stayed away for several years. When he eventually returned to Baghdād, I said to him: ‘Where have you been all this time?’ He said: ‘I made the rounds of the cities and towns of Syria, Egypt, and the West (I think he also mentioned the cities and towns of Persia), and I met three hundred and sixty Shaikhs, all of them saints [*awliyā*’]. There was not a single one amongst them who did not often say: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is our own Shaikh, and our exemplary guide toward Allāh (Exalted is He).””

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and his companions play their part in the construction of the wall around Baghdād. ☞

In the early pages of his *Ta’rīkh* [History], Ibn an-Najjār tells the reader: “I read in the *Ta’rīkh* of Abū Shujā’ ibn ad-Dahhān, in his own handwriting: ‘It was in the year [A.H.] 526 that work began on construction of the wall around Baghdād. There was not a single scholar or preacher left inside the city, since every one of them went out with his particular group of associates, and joined in the work on

the wall. One day, which happened to be the work-shift of the inhabitants of the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Aḥaj*], who were companions of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, I caught sight of a man on a riding beast, and I noticed that he had a couple of adobe bricks stacked on his head.’ (Here ends this quotation.) Speaking for myself, I would say that this indicates that, in the whole of Baghdād at that time, there was no one more utterly superb than Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

☞ Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās foresees the day when  
Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir will be commanded to say:  
“This foot of mine is upon the neck of every  
saint of Allāh.” ☞

“[Abū Shujā‘ goes on to say]: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was in the company of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās, so he came and sat in front of him, observing the best of good manners, until he stood up and took his leave. I heard Shaikh Ḥammād say, as soon as Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir had left: “This non-Arab ‘barbarian’ [*‘Ajamī*] has a foot that will be raised, when the proper time comes, and placed upon the necks of the saints [*awliyā’*] of that time. He will surely be commanded to say: ‘This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh.’ He will surely say it, and the necks of all the saints of his age will surely be bent at his disposal.”’

“Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had previously said, when Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, who was still a young man at the time, was mentioned in his presence: ‘I saw two standards on his head, erected between the lowest bestiality [*bahamūt*] and the highest Sovereignty [*Malakūt*], and I heard the Imperial herald [*shāwīsh*]<sup>35</sup> calling out to him loud and clear, on the highest horizon.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

<sup>35</sup> The word *shāwīsh* is the arabicized form of the Turkish *chavush*. In time of the Ottoman Empire, the term was applied to the halberdier of the bodyguard escorting the Sultan on state occasions.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir explains the difference between common talk [*ḥadīth*] and earnest speech [*kalām*]. ☞

It was Maḥmūd an-Na‘āl who said: “I once heard my father say: ‘I was in the company of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās, when Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir arrived on the scene. He was just a young man at that time, but Shaikh Ḥammād stood up to greet him, and said: “Welcome to the firmly rooted mountain, and to the towering rock that cannot be shaken!” He seated his young guest by his side, and said to him: “What is the difference between common talk [*ḥadīth*] and earnest speech [*kalām*]?” To this he replied: “Common talk is something to which you feel prompted to give a response, whereas earnest speech is something that knocks you clean out of chatter and emotional excitement, summoning you to conscious awareness more effectively than all the actions of men and jinn [*a‘māl ath-thaqalain*].”

“Shaikh Ḥammād then said: “You are the master of the ‘*ārifīn* [those who know by direct experience] in your own day and age. Your banner [*sanjaq*] is bound to be unfurled from the regions of the East to the regions of the West. The necks of the people of your time will be bent at your disposal. You will be elevated in spiritual rank above all your contemporaries, and your drink will come to you directly from the Source.”

“May Allāh be well pleased with both [Shaikh Ḥammād and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir]!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir invites Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās to read what is inscribed on the palm of his hand. ☞

It was Abu ‘n-Najīb as-Suhrawardī<sup>36</sup> (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: “I was in the company of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in Baghdād, in the year [A.H.] 523. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was also in his company at that time, and he had a truly magnificent way of speaking. Shaikh Ḥammād said to him: ‘O ‘Abd al-Qādir, you speak with remarkable confidence. Are you not afraid

<sup>36</sup> See note 34 on p. 63 above.

that Allāh may deal with you craftily?" Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir responded to this by placing the palm of his hand upon Shaikh Ḥammād's breast, as he said to him: 'Look with the eye of your heart at what is written on the palm of my hand!' His attention turned inward for a moment, then Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir removed his hand from Shaikh Ḥammād's breast.

"Shaikh Ḥammād said: 'I read on his palm that he has received seventy firm assurances from Allāh (Exalted is He), to the effect that He will never treat him craftily.' Shaikh Ḥammād then went on to say: 'There can be no problem after that! There can be no problem after that, for:

Such is the bounty of Allāh,  
*dhālika faḍlu 'llāhi*

which He bestows on whom He will.  
*yu'tī-hi man yashā':*

Allāh is the Lord of infinite bounty."  
*wa 'llāhu Dhu 'l-faḍli 'l-'aẓīm. (62:4)*

May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

☞ More reports concerning the blessed state of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's pupils [*murīdūn*], and of his pupils' pupils, through seven stages of succession. ☞

We owe the following report to the three Shaikhs Abu 's-Sa'ūd 'Abdu'llāh, Muḥammad al-Awānī, and 'Umar al-Barrāz (may Allāh be well pleased with them all):

"Our master Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir has guaranteed to his pupils, until the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*], that not a single one of them will die without being in a state of repentance. He has also given the assurance that his pupils, and his pupils' pupils through seven stages of succession, will enter the Garden of Paradise. He said: 'I am a surety for my pupils' pupils through seven stages. If a defect became apparent in a pupil of mine in the West, while I was in the East, I would cause it to be concealed. We must make it our business to direct our endeavors, to the fullest possible extent, toward safeguarding the welfare of our companions. Fortunate

indeed is he who has seen me, and how sorry I feel for him who has not seen me!”

“May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He also be well pleased with us, because of him!”

Shaikh ‘Alī al-Qurashī has told us: “Our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: ‘I was handed a scroll [*sijill*] that stretches as far as the eye can see, containing a list of the names of my companions and my pupils till the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*], and I was told: “They have all been granted to you.””

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir walks on the water of the River Tigris, then an enormous prayer rug [*sajjāda*] appears in the sky above. ☞

It was Sahl ibn ‘Abdi’llāh at-Tustarī<sup>37</sup> (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: “On one occasion, the people of Baghdād were puzzled by the absence of my master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). They could not find him anywhere, until someone told them: ‘He was last seen heading toward the River Tigris [*ad-Dijla*],’ so they set off in that direction, looking out for him along the way. Then, lo and behold, he came walking toward us on the water! The fishes were swimming toward him, shoal upon shoal, offering him the greeting of peace. While we were watching him, and observing how the fishes were kissing his hands, the prescribed time arrived for the midday ritual prayer [*ṣalāt aẓ-ẓuhr*]. At that very moment, what should suddenly appear but an enormous prayer rug [*sajjāda*]. It was green in color, studded with gold and silver, and embroidered upon it were two lines of script. The first read:

<sup>37</sup> This report is amazing in its content, and even more astonishing if the reporter is indeed the famous Sahl ibn ‘Abdi’llāh at-Tustarī, for he was born at Tustar (Ahwāz) ca. A.H. 200/815 C.E. He studied with Sufyān ath-Thawrī, and met Dhu’n-Nūn al-Miṣrī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon them). A quiet life was interrupted in A.H. 261/874 C.E., when he was forced to seek refuge in Baṣra, where he died in A.H. 282/896 C.E. A short commentary [*tafsīr*] on the Qur’ān is attributed to him, and he made important contributions to the development of Islāmic spiritual culture [*taṣawwuf*]. His influence is particularly evident in the teachings of the Sālimiyya school, which was founded by his pupil Ibn Sālim.

As for the friends of Allāh,  
*a-lā inna awliyā' a 'llāhi*  
 surely no fear shall be upon them,  
*lā khawfun 'alai-him*  
 nor shall they grieve.  
*wa lā hum yaḥzanūn.* (10:62)

—while the second line read:

The mercy of Allāh and His blessings  
*raḥmatu 'llāhi wa barakātu-hu*  
 be upon you, O people of the house!  
*'alai-kum ahla 'l-bait:*  
 He is Praiseworthy, Glorious!  
*inna-hu Ḥamīdun Majīd.* (11:73)

“This huge prayer rug was spread out between the sky and the earth, above the River Tigris, as if it were the flying carpet of Solomon [*bisāṭ Sulaimān*] (peace be upon him). A troop of knights arrived on the scene, as if they were a pack of lions. They were led by a knight possessing a dignified bearing, an awe-inspiring appearance, and a sense of profound tranquillity [*sakīna*]. He advanced until he and his comrades came to a halt, and stood facing the prayer rug. They stood with their heads bowed, weeping, and remained quite motionless, as if they were held in check by the rein of Divine Power [*Qudra*].

“Then, when the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] was about to begin, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) stepped forward, wrapped himself in the garment of reverential awe, and performed the prayer on the rug. The knights and their leader, and the people of Baghdād, all prayed behind the Shaikh. Whenever he proclaimed the Supreme Greatness of Allāh, the angelic bearers of the Heavenly Throne [*ḥamalat al-‘Arsh*]<sup>38</sup> declared “*Allāhu Akbar!*” together with him. Whenever he proclaimed the Glory of Allāh, the angels of the seven heavens also proclaimed His Glory. Whenever he praised Allāh, a ray of green light beamed from his mouth, till it reached the clouds high up in the sky.

“When he had concluded the performance of the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], he raised his hands, and we heard him say, as he offered his

<sup>38</sup> An allusion to Qur’ān 40:7.

prayer of supplication [*du‘ā*]: ‘O Allāh, for the sake of my ancestor, Muḥammad, Your beloved friend and Your choice out of all Your creatures, and for the sake of all my forefathers, I beg You not to snatch away the spirit [*rūḥ*] from any male or female seeker of my fresh butter [*murīd aw murīda li-idhwābī*], unless he or she is in a state of repentance!’ Then we heard the chorus of the angels, as they said ‘*Āmīn*’ to his prayer of supplication [*du‘ā*], so we joined in harmony with the angels, as we added our own ‘*Āmīn*’ to the supplication. It was then that we heard the call from on high: ‘Rejoice in the good news, for I have answered your plea!’”

(Here ends this brief excerpt from what he [Sahl ibn ‘Abdīllāh at-Tustarī] has to tell us. May Allāh be well pleased with him!)

☞ What price the egg, and what price the chicken? ☞

We owe this next report to those leading elders, al-Ḥāfiẓ ‘Abd al-Ghanī, Shaikh Muwaffaq ad-Dīn ibn Qudāma, and ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Dayyāl (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon them all):

“We were listening to our Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) while he spoke from the lectern, and we heard him say, when he was asked about the worth of those who affiliate themselves to him: ‘The egg is worth a thousand, while the chicken is simply priceless!’”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir has potent influence in every sphere. ☞

It was Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan al-Jawṣaqī who said: “Present in the company of our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh’s peace be upon him), on one occasion, were Shaikh ‘Alī al-Ḥitī and Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū. They heard Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir say: ‘From every stable, I own a stallion that cannot be matched in strength. In every land, I own horses that cannot be beaten in the race. In every armed force, I have a commander who cannot be disobeyed, and in every administrative office, I have a deputy who cannot be dismissed.’ Shaikh ‘Alī al-Ḥitī promptly assured him: ‘O my master, I and all my companions are your loyal servants!’

“May Allāh be well pleased with them all.”

☞ Like Shaikh Maʿrūf al-Karkhī before him, Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir believes that problems are best referred to Allāh (Exalted is He). ☞

Shaikh Dāwūd al-Baghdādī has told us: “One night in my dream, in the year [A.H.] 548, I saw Shaikh Maʿrūf al-Karkhī<sup>39</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and he said to me: ‘O Dāwūd, go ahead and tell me your problem, and I shall refer it to Allāh (Exalted is He).’ ‘But what about my Shaikh?’ said I, meaning Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir, ‘Have they dismissed him?’ So he said: ‘No, by Allāh, they have not dismissed him, nor will they ever dismiss him!’ At that point I woke up.

“Then, in the hour before dawn, I went to the schoolhouse of the Shaikh, and sat by the door of his private apartment, waiting for the opportunity to tell him my experience. But he called out to me from inside his apartment, before I had the chance to see him and talk to him: ‘O Dāwūd, as far as your Shaikh is concerned, they have not dismissed him, nor will they ever dismiss him. Go ahead and tell me your problem, and I shall refer it to Allāh (Exalted is He). For, by His Might and Glory, I would not present a problem to my own companions, let alone to anyone else, only to have my question about it come echoing back at me!’”

☞ Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir has much to say about the case of Ḥusain al-Ḥallāj. ☞

In his *Taʾrīkh* [History], al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad ibn Rāfiʿ relates: “It was on the eighteenth of Dhu ʿl-Qaʿda, in the year [A.H.] 639, in the Academy of Prophetic Tradition [*Dār al-Ḥadīth*] in Cairo, that I heard Ibrahīm ibn Saʿd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ghānim ibn ʿAbdīllāh ath-Thaʿlabī ar-Rūmī say:

“I once heard Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlī say, in response to a question about al-Ḥallāj:<sup>40</sup> “His claim extended too far, so the

<sup>39</sup> Abū Maḥfūẓ Maʿrūf ibn Fīrūz al-Karkhī (d. A.H. 200/815 C.E.) is said to have been born to Christian parents. After his conversion to Islām, he acquired a saintly reputation as a teacher in Baghdād, noted for his emphasis on the spiritual content of the religion, and for his personal generosity and sincere devotion. One of his pupils was Sarī as-Saqāṭī, who became in turn the teacher of al-Junaid (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon them).

<sup>40</sup> Abu ʿl-Mughīth al-Ḥusain ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, a Persian mystic and theologian who wrote in Arabic, was born about A.H. 244/858 C.E. He was accused of heresy, and arrested by the ʿAbbāsīd police in Baghdād. When, in a state of ecstasy, he uttered the words: “*Ana ʿl-Ḥaqq* [I am the Truth],” he was condemned to death. In A.H. 309/922 C.E., he was flogged, mutilated, crucified, then finally beheaded and burned. He remains a controversial figure to this day.

scissors of the Sacred Law [*Sharīʿa*] were empowered to clip it.”

It was Shaikh ʿUmar al-Bazzāz who said: “I once heard Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir say: Ḥusain al-Ḥallāj committed serious blunders, so no one in his own time would take him by the hand. But if I had been alive in his time, I would have taken him by the hand. For any one of my companions, my pupils, and my loving friends, who may ride on a mount that stumbles, between now and the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*], I shall be there to take him by the hand.”

Our master, Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir, had very much to say concerning the affair of Ḥusain al-Ḥallāj, as mentioned in the book entitled *Durar al-Jawāhir* [Pearls of Gems], which was compiled by al-Ḥāfiẓ Abu ʿl-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī from the sayings of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir, and also in the book entitled *al-Bahja* [Resplendence], which was composed by Shaikh al-Imām Nūr ad-Dīn Abu ʿl-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Lakhmī [ash-Shaṭṭānawfī], on the subject of the charismatic qualities and exploits [*manāqib*] of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir and of other saints [*awliyāʾ*] in his category. In case any readers are interested in further study, we can recommend the two books just mentioned.

### ☞ Reports concerning the special benefits enjoyed by Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir’s pupils. ☞

Shaikh Abu ʿl-Faṭḥ al-Harawī said: “I once heard Shaikh ʿAlī al-Hitī say: ‘No pupils are happier with their Shaikh than the pupils of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him).’”

He also said: “I once heard Shaikh Abū Saʿīd al-Qailawī (some give his name as Abū Saʿīd, rather than Abū Saʿīd) say: ‘Whenever our master Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir returns to the Highest Realm, all those who cling to the hem of his cloak will be saved.’”

It was Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū who said: “I saw the companions of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir, all of them, merged in the legion of the blissfully happy ones (may Allāh be well pleased with them all).”

One of the Shaikhs once said: “Someone said to Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘Among your pupils there are those who are piously dutiful and those who are wantonly

dissolute.' To this he replied: 'The piously dutiful are there for my sake, and I am there for the sake of the wantonly dissolute!'"

It was Shaikh 'Adi ibn Abi 'l-Barakāt Ṣakhr ibn Ṣakhr ibn Musāfir who said: "I once heard my father say: 'It was in the year [A.H.] 554 that I heard my paternal uncle, Shaikh 'Adi ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), say, in his convent [zāwiya] on the hill: "If the companions of any of the other Shaikhs ask me to confer a tattered robe [*khirqā*] upon them, I do so, except in the case of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, for his companions are already immersed in merciful compassion. Why should anyone leave the ocean, and come to the trickling stream?"'" May Allāh be well pleased with them all.

It was Shaikh 'Ali ibn Idris al-Ya'qūbi who said: "Shaikh 'Ali ibn al-Hitī took me by the hand and brought me to our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). This was in the year [A.H.] 550. He said to him: 'This is my loyal servant, 'Ali.' So he took off a garment he had on him, and gave it to me to wear. 'O 'Ali,' he told me, 'you have now clothed yourself with the shirt of well-being!' In all the sixty-five years that have elapsed since I first wore it, no painful suffering has ever befallen me.

"Shaikh 'Ali ibn al-Hitī also brought me to him in the year [A.H.] 560. On that occasion, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir bowed his head in silence for quite a long while, then I noticed that a gleam of light had begun to emanate from him, and that it became connected with me. At the moment when this happened, I saw the occupants of the graves and tombs, and I witnessed their states and conditions. I saw the angels and their stations, and I heard their glorification of the Lord [*tasbīḥ*] in a variety of languages. I read what was inscribed on the forehead of every human being, and matters of great importance were clearly disclosed to me. Then Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) told me: 'Just take it all in, and do not be afraid!'

"It was then that Shaikh 'Ali ibn al-Hitī said to him: 'O my master, I am truly afraid that he may lose his mind!' So he thumped on my chest with his hand, and I felt something inside my inner being [*bāṭin*], in the shape of an anvil, and I was not at all alarmed by anything I saw. I heard the glorification uttered by the angels (peace

be upon them), and even now, I am still illumined in the paths of the Heavenly Kingdom [*Malakūt*] by the radiance of that gleam of light.”

Shaikh ‘Ali ibn Idrīs al-Ya‘qūbī also said: “When I first arrived in Baghdād, I was not yet acquainted with anyone in the city, nor did I know of any place to stay. I therefore sought shelter in the schoolhouse of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). At that particular moment, there was nobody there but I. Nevertheless, I heard a voice saying, from inside his private apartment: ‘O ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, go and see who it is out there, who has come to visit us.’ So ‘Abd ar-Razzāq came out, and then went back inside, saying: ‘There is no one out there who has come to visit us, apart from a young country bumpkin [*ṣabī sawādī*], but there is something very special about this young fellow.’ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) thereupon emerged to greet me, bringing with him some bread and a dish of food. I had never seen him before, so I stood up to pay him my respect. ‘Here you are, ‘Ali,’ said he, as he set that meal down in front of me. Then, after saying three times: ‘May it do you good!’ he added: ‘There will come a time when you are needed, and you will really become an exalted one [*‘alī*].’ I am therefore always at the beck and call of my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb describes how his father, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, conducted his public speaking. ☞

It was our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), who said: “My father [Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir] used to give lectures three times a week: twice at the schoolhouse [*madrasa*]<sup>1</sup>—early in the morning on Friday, and in the evening on Tuesday—and once in the guesthouse [*rābiṭa*], early in the morning on Sunday. His lectures were regularly attended by the religious scholars [*‘ulamā’*], the jurists [*fuqahā’*] and the Shaikhs, as well as many others. His public speaking was maintained for a period of forty years, starting in the year [A.H.] 521, and ending in the year [A.H.] 561. As for the period during which he also engaged in academic teaching [*tadrīs*] and the issuing of legal opinions [*fatwā*],

that lasted for thirty-three years, starting in the year [A.H.] 528, and ending in the year [A.H.] 561.

“In the course of his regular public session [*majlis*], some of the brethren used to perform Qur’ānic recitation [*qirā’a*], in a plain and simple style, without the modulations of chanting [*alḥān*]. Qur’ānic recitation was also performed at his session by ash-Sharīf Mas‘ūd al-Hāshimī.<sup>41</sup>

“It was often the case that two or three men would die during his session.

“Four hundred inkwells were used, by learned men and others, to write down what he was saying in his discourse.

“He would often walk through the air, at some point during his session, taking several steps over the heads of his audience, then returning to the lectern.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ Jews and Christians embrace Islām at the hand of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, in the course of his public sessions. ☞

It was Shaikh ‘Umar al-Kimānī who said: “The public sessions [*majālis*] of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), were not devoid of Jews and Christians who came to embrace Islām; nor of repentant criminals, such as former highway robbers, murderers, and perpetrators of other forms of wickedness; nor of converts from some heretical doctrine. A Christian monk [*rāhib*] once came to him and accepted Islām at his hands, in the course of his public session. He then turned to the people in the audience, and said: ‘I am a man from the people of Yemen. The seed of Islām became planted in my soul, and I developed a strong determination to declare myself a Muslim, but only at the hands of the person I considered the best of the people of Yemen. I sat on the ground, thinking this over. Then sleep overwhelmed me, and I saw a vision of Jesus, the son of Mary, saying to me: ‘O Sinān, you must go to Baghdād, and embrace Islām at the hand of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, for he is the best of all the people on earth at this time!’

<sup>41</sup> The title *Sharīf* [Noble] is an indication that its bearer traces his descent from the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

“On another occasion, thirteen men from the Christian community came to him and embraced Islām at his hands, in the course of his discourse of exhortation. They said: ‘We are from the community of Arab Christians [*Naṣārā* ’l-‘*Arab*]. We wished to embrace Islām, but we hesitated for some time, wondering whom we should approach in order to declare ourselves Muslims at his hands. Then a mysterious voice [*hātif*] called out to us. We could hear the speaker’s words, but we could not see his physical form. He was telling us: “O riders in the caravan bound for salvation! You must go to Baghdād, and embrace Islām at the hand of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, for the faith [*īmān*] that will be lodged in your hearts, in his presence and through his blessed grace, will be unlike any that could be lodged in them, in the presence of any other person, at this historical time.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!””

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir tells how he came to spend his nights reciting the Qur’ān, while standing perched on one leg. ☞

“While speaking from the lectern in Baghdād, in the year [A.H.] 558, our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), told us: ‘I spent fifteen long years in complete isolation, wandering about in the deserts and wastelands of ‘Irāq. Throughout all of forty years, I would perform the dawn prayer [*ṣubḥ*] with the ritual ablution [*wuḍū’*] of the late evening prayer [*‘ishā’*].<sup>42</sup> Then [after the late evening prayer], I would recite the Qur’ān from the opening Sūra—standing perched on one leg, and with my hand in a socket knocked into the wall, for fear of falling asleep—until I came to the end of the Qur’ān, around the approach of daybreak [*ṣaḥar*].

“One night, as I was climbing a steep flight of stairs, my lower self [*nafs*] said to me: “Why not catch an hour’s sleep?” So I held myself erect, and came to a halt at the very spot where this had occurred to me. Then I balanced myself on one foot, and recited the entire Qur’ān from start to finish, while still in this rather awkward situation.”

<sup>42</sup> That is to say, without having lost the state of ritual purity obtained through that ablution.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir accepts an invitation from Abū Sa‘īd al-Mukharrimī, at the urging of al-Khiḍr (peace be upon him). ☞

“He also said (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘For eleven years, I made myself at home in the [ruined] fortress that is now called the Persian Tower [*al-Burj al-‘Ajamī*]. As a matter of fact, it was precisely because of my prolonged stay within its walls, [I being a native of the Persian province of Jilān], that it came to be called the “Persian” Tower. While I was a lodger in it, I made a solemn compact with Allāh (Exalted is He) to the effect that I would not eat until I was provided with food, and that I would not drink until I was given the means to quench my thirst. I then stayed there for a period of forty days, without eating anything at all. At the end of the forty days, along came a man with a loaf of bread and a dish of food. He set this meal down in front of me, then promptly departed and left me all alone.

“My lower self [*nafs*] immediately reasserted its instinctive urge to pounce upon the food, so I exclaimed: “By Allāh, it is not absolved of the pledge I gave to Allāh!” Then, from my inner being [*bāṭin*], I heard a loud voice yelling: “Hunger!” But I refused to indulge it.’

“He went on to say (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘It so happened that Abū Sa‘īd al-Mukharrimī was passing by at that moment, and he heard the sound, so he entered into me presence. When he asked me: “What is this all about, O ‘Abd al-Qādir?” I told him: “This is nothing but the antics of the lower self [*nafs*]. As far as the spirit [*rūḥ*] is concerned, it is perfectly calm and quiet, reposing undisturbed in the presence of its Master [*Mawlā*] (Almighty and Glorious is He).” “Come to the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Aḥajj*],” he said to me, then he went off and left me there in my peculiar state. I said to myself: “I shall not leave this situation without a command [from the Lord].”

“He continued (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘It was then that al-Khiḍr<sup>43</sup> (peace be upon him) came up to me and told me: ‘Get up at once, and go to Abū Sa‘īd [al-Mukharrimī]!’ So off I went, and there I found him, standing by the door of his house, expecting my

<sup>43</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

arrival. “O ‘Abd al-Qādir,” he said to me, “was it not enough for you, to have me say: ‘Come visit me!’?” It was then that he conferred upon me the tattered robe [*khirqā*], with his own hand. From that time on, I remained constant in my dedication to him, as his diligent student.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir misses the loneliness of the desert, but he admits that Allāh (Exalted is He) has put him to good use. ☞

It was [Shaikh Abū Muḥammad] al-Jubbā’ī who said: “Our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, once said to me: ‘I dearly wish that I could be in the deserts and wastelands again, as I was in those early days, so that I would not see my fellow creatures, and they would not see me!’

“Then he went on to say: ‘Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) must have intended to use me as a source of benefit for His creatures, since more than five thousand Jews and Christians have embraced Islām at my hand, and more than one hundred thousand vagabonds [*‘ayyārūn*] and armed gangsters [*masāliḥa*]<sup>44</sup> have repented at my hand, and this adds up to a great deal of good.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ When Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir sneezes, one Friday, the reigning Caliph is terror-stricken by the popular response. ☞

Ibrāhīm ad-Dārī once said: “Every Friday, when our own Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), was passing by on his way to the congregational mosque [*jāmi‘*], the people in the markets used to pause from doing business, in order to beg Allāh to satisfy their needs for his sake. He possessed a great prestige [*ṣīt*] and a great voice [*ṣawt*], a dignified bearing [*samt*] and an impressive silence [*ṣamt*]. When he happened to sneeze, one Friday, the people commiserated with him so loudly that a tumultuous

<sup>44</sup> See note 22 on p. 48 above.

clamor was heard, as those in the congregational mosque joined the chorus of voices crying: 'May Allāh bestow His mercy upon you, and may He make you the instrument of His mercy!'<sup>45</sup> The reigning Caliph, al-Mustanjid-bi'llāh, was in a special compartment [*maqṣūra*]<sup>46</sup> in the mosque, and when he asked: 'What is all this din and clamor?' he was told: 'Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir happened to sneeze.' This had a terrifying impact on the Caliph!"

☞ Some examples of the extraordinary deference accorded to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. ☞

It was Ibn Nuqṭa aṣ-Ṣirāfinī who said: "Shaikh Baqā, Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī and Shaikh al-Qailawī used to come together to the schoolhouse of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. Once they had arrived there, they would sweep the doorway and sprinkle water to dampen the dust. They would not enter the Shaikh's presence without first receiving permission. When they did enter his presence, he would say to them: 'Sit down!' and they would say: 'And are we granted safekeeping?' So he would say: 'You are granted safekeeping!' Then they would sit down, feeling satisfied that they had behaved correctly.

"Among those present when the Shaikh went out to mount his riding beast, there were some who would pick up the saddle-cover, hold it in front of him, and walk a few steps with it. He used to forbid them to do that, however, so they would say: 'With the like of this [royal treatment] he will draw near to Allāh (Exalted is He)!'"

He also said: "In observing the elders of 'Irāq, contemporaries of the Shaikh, as they enter his schoolhouse [*madrasa*] or his guesthouse [*ribāṭ*], I have noticed that many of them are in the habit of kissing the threshold."

Expressing himself in poetry, the same reporter said:

Around his doorway throng the crowns of kings,  
and then, at greeting-time, they jostle all the more.  
When they spy him from afar, their crowns come off,  
or else, if they do not, their heads roll on the floor!

<sup>45</sup> *yarḥamu-ka'llāh—wa yarḥamu bi-k.* A detailed account of the traditional Islāmic etiquette of sneezing is provided in the work by Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. (See Vol. 1, pp. 297–99, of the Al-Baz edition.)

<sup>46</sup> The term *maqṣūra* denotes a box or stall, situated near the prayer niche [*miḥrāb*] in a mosque and reserved for the ruling authority.

It was Shaikh Baqiyyat as-Salaf Abu 'l-Ghanā'im Miqdām al-Baṭā'ihī who said: "A man from among the companions of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir once came to visit Shaikh 'Uthmān ibn Marwaza al-Baṭā'ihī, who said to him: 'O my son, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir is the best of all the inhabitants of the earth at this time. May Allāh be well pleased with him!'"

Shaikh al-Mu'ammār al-Jarrād once said: "These two eyes of mine have never set sight on anyone of better moral character, nor of broader inner feeling, nor of nobler personality, nor of kinder heart, nor of greater loyalty and affection, than Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. Without regard for the majesty of his stature, the exalted nature of his rank, and the vast extent of his knowledge, he would support the lowly and challenge the great. He would always be the first to offer the greeting of peace [*salām*]. He would entertain the weak, and treat the poor with humble respect, though he would not stand up for any of the high-and-mighty and the notables, nor would he go knocking at the door of any minister [*wazīr*] or ruler [*sulṭān*]."

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir entertains the chieftains  
of Mount Qāf. ☞

Shaikh al-Baṭā'ihī also said: "When I entered the presence of our master and our very own Shaikh, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), one day in his private apartment, I discovered in his company four individuals whom I had never seen before that moment. I therefore stood in my place, until they got up and took their leave of him, at which point the Shaikh said: 'Go and catch up with them, and ask them to offer a prayer of supplication [*du'ā'*] on your behalf!' So I caught up with them in the courtyard of the schoolhouse, and asked them to offer a prayer of supplication on my behalf. One of them said to me: 'You deserve our most hearty congratulations! You are the loyal servant of a man by whose blessed grace Allāh preserves the earth intact, with its level fields and its rugged terrain, its continents and its oceans. In response to his prayer, Allāh bestows His mercy on all creatures, be they pious or dissolute. We, and all the other saints [*awliyā'*], are within the

safekeeping of the breaths he breathes, under the protection of his foot, and within the orbit of his command.' Then they departed, though I did not see where they went, so I returned to the Shaikh in a state of bewilderment. Before I had told him anything, he said to me: 'O 'Abdu'llāh [Servant of Allāh], you must not let anyone know what they said to you, so long as I am still alive.' 'O my master,' said I, 'who are those men?' and he replied: 'They are the chieftains of Mount Qāf,<sup>47</sup> and they must be back in their own places by now.

"May Allāh be well pleased with them!"



<sup>47</sup> Mount Qāf may sometimes be understood to mean Mount Caucasus. In many legendary tales, however, it refers to a circular mountain range, believed to encompass the world.

## The Caliph voices a complaint about Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

**A**s related by Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir, his father once said: “I served my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, for thirteen years, and in all of that time I never saw him blow his nose, nor did I ever see him hawk and spit. Not a single fly ever settled upon him. He did not stand up for any of the high-and-mighty. He did not go knocking at the door of the holder of worldly power [*dhi ’s-sulṭān*], and he neither sat on his carpet, nor ate any of his food, except on one occasion. He used to regard sitting on the mats of kings, and of their followers, as one of the punishments inflicted in advance [here in this world, before the Resurrection].

“When he heard that the king and the vizier and other dignitaries were coming to visit him, while he was holding a session, he would get up and slip into his private apartment. Then, when they had already taken their seats, the Shaikh would come back out from his private apartment. He thereby avoided having to stand up in their honor. He would use coarse language when speaking to them, and deliver his admonition to them in exaggerated terms, while they would kiss his hand, and sit in his presence with an affected air of modest humility and self-belittlement.

“When he engaged in correspondence with the Caliph, he would write to him: ‘‘Abd al-Qādir commands you to do such-and-such. As you must surely know, his command is imperative upon you, and obedience to him is obligatory for you, since he is your exemplary guide, and a competent authority over you.’ Then, having read his sheet of paper, the Caliph would kiss it, saying: ‘The Shaikh has told the truth!’”

Shaikh Abu ’l-Ḥasan the Jurist [*al-Faqīh*] once said that the Chief Minister [*Wazīr*], Ibn Hubaira, had told him: “The Caliph,

al-Muqtafi-li-Amri'llāh Muḥammad, voiced a complaint about Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, saying: 'He treats me with scornful disdain. Having mentioned me by name, he says to the palm tree at his guesthouse: "O palm tree, do not act unjustly, or I shall cut off your head!" He is definitely aiming this remark at me. You must go to him at once, and tell him, in a private situation: "It is absolutely improper for you to set yourself in opposition to the Leader [Imām], when you acknowledge the duty of service to the Caliphate!"'"

"The Chief Minister continued: 'I therefore went to see the Shaikh, and found a group of people congregated in his presence, so I sat and waited for an opportunity to speak with him in private. In the meantime, I listened to him talking, and I heard him say, in the course of his speech: "Yes, I shall cut off its head." I realized that this remark was intended for me, so I got up and left.'

"The Chief Minister went on to tell me: 'I presented myself [to the Caliph] and related to him what had transpired.' The Chief Minister burst into tears, as he said: 'There is no doubt about the righteousness of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir!' Then he had himself transported to join his company, and he sat there in front of him, observing the best of good manners. The Shaikh admonished him, and kept on admonishing him, until he reduced him to tears, then he changed his tone and treated him with gentle kindness.

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ The Grand Mufti of 'Irāq provides a vivid description of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's character. ☞

We owe this next report to the Grand Mufti of 'Irāq, Muḥyi 'd-Dīn Abū 'Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥāmid al-Baghdādī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), who said:

"Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was quick to shed tears, intensely affected by fear [of the Lord], and imbued with a great sense of awe. He was someone whose prayer was sure to be answered. His entire bearing was aglow with reverence. He was honorable in his traits of character, and noble in his lines of descent. He was the furthest of all people from immoral behavior,

and the nearest of all people to the Truth. He was extremely stern in his response, whenever the sanctuaries of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) were violated. He was never angry on his own account, and he never supported the cause of anyone other than his Lord. He never turned the beggar away empty-handed, even if all he had to give him was one of his only pair of shirts. Enabling grace [*tawfiq*] was his guiding principle, and readiness to help was his mainstay. Knowledge [*ʿilm*] was his instructor, and nearness [to the Lord] was his educator. Mutual conversation [*muḥāḍara*] was his treasure, and direct experience [*maʿrifa*] was his stronghold. Preaching was his counselor, and observation was his ambassador. Intimate friendship [*uns*] was his confidant, and entertainment was his breath of fresh air. Truthfulness was his banner, openness was his stock-in-trade, and tolerance was his professional occupation. Remembrance [*dhikr*] was his chief minister, and reflection [*fikr*] was his entertaining companion. Spiritual disclosure [*mukāshafa*] was his nourishment, and direct witnessing [*mushāhada*] was his medicine. The good manners of the Sacred Law [*ādāb ash-Sharīʿa*] were his outward form [*ẓāhir*], and the attributes of Reality [*awṣāf al-Ḥaqīqa*] were his innermost contents [*sarāʾir*].”

Expressing himself in poetry,<sup>48</sup> he also had this to say about the Shaikh:

For Allāh’s sake you have earned a rank of dignity,  
and you are noble by pure ancestry and origin.  
Your splendid stature towers so high, that the rainbow  
forms a stirrup for the soles of your feet.  
You have built a house in the heights above,  
and the planets are like flowers on the trellis around it.  
O robe of this world, by the splendor of whose glory  
old age has turned into the freshness of youth!  
The virgins on high sought after you, the star of guidance,  
and they are ones who baffle the seeker!  
When they saw you at last, those beauties proposed to you  
but only to have their proposal rejected.  
Then there came to you, as the mark of leadership,  
exploits that even a master could hardly perform.

<sup>48</sup> In the original Arabic, each verse of this poem ends with the rhyme *-ābā* (*niṣābā; rikābā; aṭnābā; etc.*).

☞ Shaikh Mūsā tells how his father, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, outwitted a cunning devil. ☞

It was my master Shaikh Mūsā, the son of our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), who said:

“I once heard my father say: ‘I went out into the desert, in the course of my wandering, and spent several days there without finding any water. My thirst grew very intense, but then a cloud cast its cooling shadow upon me, and from it there descended upon me something resembling moisture. With this I was able to quench my thirst. Then I saw a light, by which the whole horizon was made luminous. A mysterious figure suddenly appeared, and from it came the sound of a voice, calling: “O ‘Abd al-Qādir, I am your Lord, and I have made lawful to you things that are normally unlawful!” (Or the voice may have said: “...that which I have made unlawful to other people.”)

“I promptly exclaimed: “I take refuge with Allāh from Satan the damned [*a‘ūdhu bi’llāhi mina ‘sh-shaiṭāni ‘r-rajīm*]. Be off with you, O accursed one!” That light immediately turned dark, and that mysterious figure became a puff of smoke. Then it spoke to me again, only this time it said: “O ‘Abd al-Qādir, you have given me the slip by means of your knowledge, the decree of your Lord, and your clever understanding of the states of your spiritual stages. By playing some similar version of this trick, I have already succeeded in misleading seventy of the people of the Spiritual Path [*ahl aṭ-Ṭarīq*].” I thereupon expressed my relief by saying: “To my Lord belongs all credit for the gracious favor and the blessing!”

“When someone asked my father: ‘How could you tell that it was a devil [*shaiṭān*]?’ he explained: ‘By the fact that it said: “I have made lawful to you things that are normally unlawful,” for I knew that Allāh does not command immoral conduct [*fahshā*’].”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was quoting from the verse [*āya*] of the Qur’ān:

And when they do something immoral,  
they say: “We found our fathers doing it  
and Allāh has enjoined it on us.”  
Say: “Allāh does not command  
immoral conduct.  
Do you say about Allāh  
what you do not know?” (7:28)

*wa idhā fa’alū fāhishatan*  
*qālū wajadnā ‘alai-hā ābā’ a-nā*  
*wa ‘llāhu amara-nā bi-hā:*  
*qul inna ‘llāha*  
*lā ya’uru bi’l-fahshā’:*  
*a-taqūlūna ‘ala ‘llāhi*  
*mā lā ta’lamūn.*

☞ Some questions and answers concerning the nature of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s spiritual path [*ṭarīq*]. ☞

It was Shaikh ‘Ali ibn Idrīs al-Ya‘qūbī who said: “Shaikh ‘Ali ibn al-Hitī was once asked a question, while I was listening, about the spiritual path [*ṭarīq*] of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He said in reply: ‘His first step was the delegation [of all authority to the Lord] [*tafwīd*],<sup>50</sup> and compliance [with His decree] [*muwāfaqqa*], in the complete renunciation of all claim to personal power and strength. His procedure consisted in the shedding of attachments [*tajrīd*], the affirmation of Divine Oneness [*tawhīd*], and total concentration on singular devotion [*tafrīd*], combined with presence at the time of worshipful servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*], standing with an innermost being [*sirr*] in the position of servanthood [*‘abdiyya*], not because of anything, nor for the sake of anything [other than Allāh]. His worshipful servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*] was derived from the sheer perfection of Lordship [*Rubūbiyya*], for he was a servant [*‘abd*] who had transcended the companionship of differentiation [*muṣāḥabat at-tafrīqa*] and risen to the celestial spheres of unification [*maṭālī‘ al-jam‘*], in full conformity with the rules of the Sacred Law [*aḥkām ash-Shar‘*].”

As we are told by Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Abi ‘l-Barakāt Ṣakhr ibn Ṣakhr ibn Musāfir: “I heard my father say: ‘Someone once said to my paternal uncle, Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir, while I was listening: “What is the spiritual path [*ṭarīq*] of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir?” To this my uncle replied: “It means withering away beneath the currents of the Divine decrees [*aqdār*], with the harmonious compliance of the heart and the spirit [*rūḥ*], the unification of the inner and the outer being [*ittiḥād al-bāṭin wa’ṣ-ṣāhir*], and being stripped of the attributes of the lower self [*nafs*], as well as complete detachment from all concern with benefit and harm, nearness and remoteness.””

May Allāh be well pleased with all the Shaikhs referred to here!

<sup>50</sup> As Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explains in the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above (Vol. 5, p. 115, of the Al-Baz edition):

Putting one’s trust in the Lord [*tawakkul*] is actually the first of three stages, namely: (1) the basic sense of trust [*tawakkul*], then (2) the act of surrender or resignation [*taslīm*], and then (3) the act of delegation [*tafwīd*]. The person who is at the stage of basic trust [*al-mutawakkil*] is one who feels confident in relying on the promise [*wa‘d*] of his Lord. The person who is at the stage of surrender or resignation [*ṣāhib at-taslīm*] is one who is content to rely on His knowledge [*‘ilm*]. The person who is at the stage of delegation [*ṣāhib at-tafwīd*] is one who is happy to accept His judgment [*ḥukm*].

It was Khalil ibn Aḥmad aṣ-Ṣarṣarī who said: "I once heard Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū say: 'As for the spiritual path [*ṭarīq*] of our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), it consists in the unification of word and deed, the unification of the self [*nafs*] and the moment, the embracing of sincere devotion [*ikhhlās*]<sup>51</sup> and submissive resignation [*taslīm*], harmonious compliance with the Book and the Sunna in every thought, every glance, every breath, every experience, and every spiritual state, as well as steadfast constancy in relation to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).'"

To quote the words of Shaikh Abū Sa'īd al-Qailawī: "The example set by our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), is that of being with Allāh [*ma'a 'llāh*], in Allāh [*fi 'llāh*], and because of Allāh [*bi'llāh*]. Great chiefs have lacked the strength and energy to follow his example, and he has overtaken many of the front-runners by clinging to a path [*ṭarīqa*] in which there is no interruption. Allāh (Exalted is He) has raised him to a splendid station, on account of his meticulous dedication [*tadqīq*] to his insistent pursuit of the Truth [*taḥqīq*]."

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir thumbs through a book on philosophy, and it turns into a well-known work on the Qur'ān. ☞

We owe this next report to Shaikh al-Muẓaffar Manṣūr ibn al-Mubārak al-Wāsiṭī, commonly known by the nickname al-Judāda [Fruit of the Palm Tree]. He said:

"Once, while I was still a young man, I entered the presence of Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), together with a large group. I had with me a book that dealt with questions of abstract philosophy [*falsafa*] and the speculative sciences of spirituality [*'ulūm ar-rūḥāniyyāt*]. As soon as we entered his presence, the Shaikh spoke to me—to me personally, not to the group as a whole—and before he had examined the book, or asked me about its contents, he said: 'That book of yours is a bad companion.

<sup>51</sup> In the major work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has devoted an enlightening section to the subject of sincere devotion [*ikhhlās*]. (See Vol. 3, pp. 330–36, of the Al-Baz edition.)

You had better go and give it a thorough wash!” I reacted to this by deciding to leave his presence, drop the book into some receptacle or other, and then refrain from carrying it with me after that, for fear of offending the Shaikh. My lower self [*nafs*] could not accept the idea of giving it a wash, because I had developed quite a fondness for it, and some of its theories and principles had stimulated my intellectual curiosity. I was about to get up and leave, intending to carry out this plan of action, but the Shaikh gave me such a stare, like someone regarding me with incredulous amazement, that I simply could not get up.

“I felt trapped in a state of paralysis, but then he said to me: ‘Hand me that book of yours!’ So I opened it, and lo and behold, there was nothing inside it but blank paper, with not a single letter written on it! I gave it to the Shaikh, and he thumbed through its pages, then he said: ‘This is the Book of the Excellent Merits of the Qur’ān [*Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*], by Ibn aḍ-Ḍaris Muḥammad.’ When he handed it back to me, I saw that it was indeed the Book of the Excellent Merits of the Qur’ān [*Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*], by Ibn aḍ-Ḍaris Muḥammad, written in a most handsome calligraphic script!

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then said to me: ‘Are you ready to turn in repentance from saying with your tongue what is not in your heart?’ I said: ‘Yes, O my master,’ so he told me to stand up. I obediently rose to my feet, and I had forgotten all about philosophy and the principles of spirituality! They had been totally erased from my inner being [*bāṭin*], as if they had never captured my interest.”

☞ A braggart benefits from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s intercession. ☞

Shaikh al-Muẓaffar al-Judāda also said: “I once saw Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) reclining on a cushion. While he was in that position, someone said to him: ‘So-and-so’—the speaker actually mentioned the name of a man who was quite famous, at that time, for charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], worship in secluded retreats, pious abstinence, and acts of obedient service—is reported as having said: “I have already surpassed the spiritual

station of Jonah, the son of Amittai [*Yūnus ibn Mattai*], the Prophet of Allāh (peace be upon him).” When the Shaikh heard this, an angry expression appeared on his face, then he sat upright, grasped the cushion with his hand, and tossed it in front of him. “That has given him a heart attack!” he exclaimed.

“Some of us got up at once, and rushed off to see how the man was. We found that he had suffered a fatal stroke at that moment, although he had previously been perfectly fit and well, with no kind of health problem whatsoever. Then I saw him again in a dream, and his condition was fine, so I said to him: ‘How has Allāh treated you?’ To this he replied: ‘He has forgiven me, and I have obtained pardon from His Prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai [*Yūnus ibn Mattai*], for what I said about him. It was my master, ‘Abd al-Qādir, who acted as my intercessor [*shafi‘*] with Allāh, and also with Jonah, the son of Amittai [*Yūnus ibn Mattai*], and I have received much benefit through the blessed grace of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him).”

☞ Profound impressions left by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir,  
as described by some of those who met him. ☞

It was Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Abi ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Baṭā’ihī ar-Rifā’ī who said: “I made my way to Baghdād, and spent time there in the company of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh’s peace be upon him). I was truly astonished by what I observed of his spiritual state, the freedom of his heart from all attachment, and the sheer clarity of his innermost being [*sirr*]. When I returned home to Umm ‘Ubaida, I told my maternal uncle, Shaikh Aḥmad, about that, and he said: ‘O my son, who can match the aptitude of ‘Abd al-Qādir, and what he is about, and that to which he has attained?’”

As we are told by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan: “I once heard Shaikh ‘Alī al-Qurashī tell a man: ‘If you had seen Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, you would have seen a man whose personal strength had vanished on his path to his Lord. The strengths of the people of the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*] are intense commitment and persistence, and his path was the way of the affirmation of Divine Oneness [*tawḥīd*], in character, in principle, and in actual condition. His pursuit of the Truth was

in accordance with the Sacred Law [*Sharʿ*], both outwardly [*ẓāhiran*] and inwardly [*bāṭinan*]. His attributes were a heart free from all attachment, a state of absence [from the world of creatures], and the direct contemplation of a Present Lord, with an inner content [*sarīra*] undisturbed by doubts, an innermost being [*sirr*] uncontested by rivals [to Allāh], and a heart undivided by remnants [of worldly interest]. The Greatest Sovereignty [*al-Malakūt al-Akbar*] was set behind him, and the Supreme Kingdom [*al-Mulk al-Aʿẓam*] beneath his foot.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ An earlier Shaikh predicts that Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir will be one of the eight mainstays [*awtād*] of ʿIrāq. ☞

It was Shaikh Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī who said: “I once heard our Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā say: ‘The mainstays [*awtād*] of ʿIrāq are eight in number, namely: (1) Maʿrūf al-Karkhī;<sup>52</sup> (2) Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal;<sup>53</sup> (3) Bishr al-Ḥāfi;<sup>54</sup> (4) Maṣṣūr ibn ʿAmmār;<sup>55</sup> (5) al-Junaid;<sup>56</sup> (6) as-Sarī [as-Saqāṭī];<sup>57</sup> (7) Sahl ibn ʿAbdīllāh at-Tustarī;<sup>58</sup> and (8) ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.’

“When I asked him: ‘And who is ʿAbd al-Qādir?’ he replied: ‘A noble Persian [*Ajamī*] who will settle in Baghdād. His appearance

<sup>52</sup> See n. 39 on p. 71

<sup>53</sup> Imām Abū ʿAbdīllāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal ash-Shaibānī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was the founder of one of the four schools [*madhāhib*] of Islamic jurisprudence. He died in the year A.H. 241/855 C.E. The legal doctrines of the Ḥanbalī school were those studied most intensively by Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) as a young man.

<sup>54</sup> Abū Naṣr Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ḥāfi [“the Barefoot”] (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was born near Merv ca. A.H. 150/767 C.E. Converted from a life of wanton dissipation, he settled in Baghdād, where he became a serious student of the traditions of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), but he then abandoned formal learning for the life of a wandering beggar. He died in Baghdād in A.H. 227/841 C.E.

<sup>55</sup> Maṣṣūr ibn ʿAmmār is a saintly figure from around the time of al-Junaid (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon them).

<sup>56</sup> See note 29 on p. 57 above.

<sup>57</sup> Abū'l-Ḥasan Sarī ibn al-Mughallis as-Saqāṭī was the uncle and teacher of al-Junaid. Having begun his career in Baghdād as a dealer in secondhand goods, he became a pupil of Maʿrūf al-Karkhī. He died in A.H. 253/867 C.E., at the age of 98. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him and his teachers.

<sup>58</sup> See note 37 on p. 68 above.

on the scene will occur in the fifth century [of the Hijra]. He will be one of the champions of the Truth [*ṣiddīqīn*], the mainstays [*awtād*], the unique individuals [*afrād*], the outstanding figures [*a'yān*] of this world, and the cardinal poles [*aqṭāb*] of the age.”

☞ The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) comes riding through the air, along with Moses (peace be upon him), and confers a robe of honor upon Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

Our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), once said: “I saw Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in Baghdād, while I was at the lectern. He was mounted on a riding beast, and Moses (peace be upon him) was riding by his side. ‘O Moses,’ he said, ‘Is there, in your community [*umma*], any man such as this one here?’ The answer was ‘No!’ so he said to me: ‘O ‘Abd al-Qādir, [did you hear that?!]’ He was airborne, so he embraced me, lifted me up, and conferred upon me a robe of honor [*khil’a*] that he had been wearing. He said: ‘This is the robe of honor that marks the rank of Cardinal Poleship [*Quṭbiyya*] over the men of valor and the spiritual deputies [*ar-rijāl wa ’l-abdāl*].’ Then he spat in my mouth three times, before returning me to the pulpit. I thereupon intoned these verses of poetry:

I shall sip that drink in every chapel and synagogue,  
and demonstrate my religion and my doctrine to the lovers.  
For the sake of its goblets, I shall beat the tambourine  
on the rooftop, in plain view, not hiding away in the corners.

[*sa-ashrabu-hā fī kulli dairin wa bī’atin*  
*wa uḡhiru li’l-’ushshāqi dīnī wa madhhabī*  
*wa adribu fawqa ’s-saṭhi bi’d-duffi jilwatan*  
*li-kāsāti-hā lā fī ’z-zawāyāti mukhtabī.*]

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is extolled by a Shaikh whose name means “Twig of the Fragrant Ben-tree.” ☞

It was al-Khaḍīr al-Ḥusainī al-Mawṣīlī who said: “I once noticed that Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān [‘Twig of the Fragrant Ben-tree’] al-Mawṣīlī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was behaving with abject humility and self-belittlement, and I heard him say: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd

al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) is the leader of the caravan of the lovers [of the Lord] [*muḥibbīn*], the exemplary guide of the spiritual wayfarers [*sālikīn*], the Imām of the champions of the Truth [*ṣiddīqīn*], the living proof of those who know by direct experience [*ʿārīfīn*], and the bosom of those who are brought near [*muqarrabīn*], in this day and age, and of the generation that will succeed them.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”



Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir declares,  
“This foot of mine is upon the neck  
of every saint of Allāh.”

**W**e owe this next report to al-Ḥāfiẓ Abu ‘l-‘Izz ‘Abd al-Mughīth ibn Ḥarb al-Baghdādī, among others, who said:

“We were present at the regular session [*majlis*] held by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī, at his guesthouse [*ribāṭ*] in the Racetrack district [*al-Ḥalba*] of Baghdād. Most of the Shaikhs of ‘Irāq were in attendance at his session on that particular day, including all those in the following list:

- Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī
- Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū
- Shaikh Abū Sa‘īd al-Qailawī
- Shaikh Mūsā ibn Māhīn (some say: Māhān)
- Shaikh Abu ‘n-Najīb as-Suhrawardī
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-Karam
- Shaikh Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān al-Qurashī
- Shaikh Makārim al-Akbar [the Senior]
- Shaikh Maṭīr
- Shaikh Jāgīr
- Shaikh Khalīfa
- Shaikh Ṣadaqa
- Shaikh Yaḥyā al-Murta‘ish
- Shaikh aḍ-Ḍiyā Ibrāhīm al-Jawnī
- Shaikh Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī

- Shaikh Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān al-Baṭā’ihī
- Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Yamānī
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-‘Abbās ash-Shawkī (said to be one of those remarkable men who travel by invisible means of transport)
- Shaikh Sulṭān al-Muzayyin
- Shaikh Abū Bakr ash-Shaibānī
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn al-Ustādh
- Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Kawsaj
- Shaikh Mubārak al-Ḥumairī
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-Barakāt
- Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī
- Shaikh Abu ‘s-Sa‘ūd al-‘Aṭṭār
- Shaikh Abū ‘Abdi’llāh al-Awānī
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-Qāsim al-Bazzāz
- Shaikh Shihāb ‘Umar as-Suhrawardī
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-Baqā al-Baqqāl
- Shaikh Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ghazālī
- Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Fārisī
- Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Ya‘qūbī
- Shaikh Abū Ḥafṣ al-Kīmānī
- Shaikh Abū Bakr al-Muzayyin
- Shaikh Jamīl Ṣāḥib al-Khaṭwa wa ‘z-Za‘qa [‘Owner of the Stride and the Scream’]
- Shaikh Abū ‘Amr aṣ-Ṣirāfinī
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan al-Jawsaqī
- Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥuraimī
- Shaikh al-Qāḍī [the Judge] Abū Ya‘lā al-Farrā’.

“Many others were also in attendance, along with those mentioned above. When Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir addressed them, his heart was

present in full awareness, as he declared: 'This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh [*qadamī hādhihi 'alā raqabati kulli waliyyin li'llāh*].'

"Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī sprang to his feet at once, then climbed the steps up to the lectern, where he grasped the Shaikh's foot and set in upon his neck, as he placed his head beneath the hem of the Shaikh's robe. All of those present extended their necks in this same manner."

☞ Questions and answers concerning the true nature and significance of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's declaration: "This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh." ☞

It was Shaikh 'Adī ibn Abi 'l-Barakāt Ṣakhr ibn Ṣakhr ibn Musāfir who said: "My father Ṣakhr told me: 'I said to my paternal uncle, Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with him): "Of all the preeminent Shaikhs, do you know of any other, apart from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, who has ever said: 'This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh?'" He told me that he knew of no other, so I asked him: "What is the meaning of it?" He said: "It represents an explicit declaration concerning the station of uniqueness [*fardiyya*], which he occupied in his era." I then went on to ask: "Does each era have its own unique individual [*fard*]?" "Yes, it does," said he, "but no one has been commanded to utter this declaration, apart from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him)." "Do you mean to say," I asked, "that he was commanded to make the pronouncement?" "Yes," my uncle replied, "he received a command [from the Lord], and they all lowered their heads to the place of the command. As you must surely know, when the angels (peace be upon them) bowed down in prostration to Adam, they only did so because they received the command [from their Lord] precisely to that effect."'"

It was Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū an-Nahr-Malikī who said: "When Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir declared: 'This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh,' Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-'Azab, the son of Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ar-Rifā'ī al-Baṭā'ihī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), said:

“My father said to my maternal uncle, Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī: “Did Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say: ‘This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh (Exalted is He)’ in obedience to a command [from his Lord], or without having received a command?” To this my uncle replied: “Of course he said it in obedience to a command! May Allāh be well pleased with him!””

From a report transmitted by a reliable chain of authorities [*isnād*], we learn that Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā (may Allāh grant us the benefit of his spiritual influence) said one day, during the session he was holding with his companions:

“Someone very special is going to appear in ‘Irāq, at some time in the future. A man from among the Persians, he will be endowed with high status in the sight of Allāh, as well as in the sight of his fellow human beings. His name will be ‘Abd al-Qādir, and his residence will be in Baghdād. He will declare: ‘This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh,’ and all the saints [*awliyā’*] in his generation will pay allegiance to that unique individual, in his own day and age.”

The Shaikh al-Islām,<sup>59</sup> Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (may Allāh cover him with His mercy) was once asked to explain the meaning of the pronouncement uttered by our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh.’ He responded (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) by delivering a speech, the whole text of which would take up many pages, but the gist of it is contained in the following passage:

“The occurrence of supernatural events [*khawāriq*] can indeed be experienced by the human being. That is a fact, and a fact that only the stubbornly pigheaded would attempt to refute. Our leading authorities have propounded a standard criterion, applicable to supernatural experiences, whereby the distinction can be drawn between that which is genuine and that which is spurious. They have stated that, if the experience happens to—or emerges from—the person concerned, in the correct and straightforward manner, it constitutes a charismatic gift [*karāma*], as in the case of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.”

<sup>59</sup> In most historical contexts, the title “Shaikh al-Islām” is more or less synonymous with “Grand Mufti.” Its holder may be described as “the Chief Minister of the Canon Law of Islām.”

☞ Further commentaries on Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s famous declaration. ☞

It was the Provost of the Scholars [*Sultān al-‘Ulamā’*] and Shaikh al-Islām, ‘Izz ad-Dīn ibn ‘Abd as-Salām, who said: “Of no one’s charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] have we received so many reports—one after another in constant succession—as those we have received concerning the charismatic talents of the *Sultān* of the saints, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). It is clear that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was consciously alert, and that he meticulously observed the rules of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*], while calling upon others to observe them, shunning any contravention of them, and engaging the people’s interest in them. He was equally meticulous in his dedication to worshipful service [*‘ibāda*] and the spiritual struggle [*mujāhada*].

“What is even more remarkable, is that he managed to combine all this with active involvement in concerns, such as wives and children, that are usually too distracting to permit such total dedication. If someone is able to follow such a path, he must indeed be closer than others to perfection, especially since it reflects the character of [the Prophet], the Master of the Sacred Law [*Ṣāhib ash-Sharī‘a*] (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

“This explains why the Shaikh said: ‘This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh’—because no one else in his generation is known to have matched him in combining these perfections. The purpose was to emphasize the tremendous importance of his business, and there can be no doubt that such aggrandizement was fully justified. ‘Allāh guides whomever He will to a path that is straight.’”<sup>60</sup>

There are some who maintain: “The word ‘foot’ is used figuratively or metaphorically [*majāzī*] in this context, and should not be taken literally [*ḥaqīqī*], because this metaphorical sense is compatible with good manners, and makes its general application possible. The word ‘foot [*qadam*],’ is often used as a synonym for ‘path [*ṭarīqa*],’ as in an expression like: ‘So-and-so is on a praiseworthy foot [*qadam ḥamīd*],’ that is to say, ‘a praiseworthy path [*ṭarīqa ḥamīda*]’ or, ‘a splendid performance of worshipful service’ or, ‘a beautiful mode of conduct,’ and so on. [In the case of the Shaikh’s pronouncement] it signifies

<sup>60</sup> wa ‘llāhu yahdī man yashā’u ilā ṣirāṭin mustaqīm. (Q. 24:46)

that his path, his nearness [to the Lord], and his opening [to the bestowal of Divine grace] are at the highest level of any path, nearness and opening, and have reached the ultimate stage of development.

“As for the foot in the literal sense [*qadam ḥaqīqī*], Allāh knows best, but this could hardly be what the Shaikh intended, because of its lack of propriety. It would be improper from several standpoints, including the traditional respect for good manners [*adab*], on which the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīq*] is built, as indicated by al-Junaid<sup>61</sup> and others (may Allāh be well pleased with them all). For instance, what is in keeping with the spiritual station of this knower-by-direct-experience [*‘ārīf*], this saint [*walī*] of noble dignity, is that his way of speaking should be as eloquent and as unambiguous as possible. The best interpretation, therefore, is that [metaphorical understanding] explained at the outset.”

According to some, the Shaikh said: “My forehead [*qādimī*]...,” rather than: “My foot [*qadamī*]...” As for this, and various other suggestions that have been put forward, we can only say that Allāh knows best [*wa ‘llāhu A‘lam*]. We may discuss what is outwardly apparent, but when it comes to the hidden secrets, Allāh knows more than we can ever know.

May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh, and may He grant him contentment.

☞ Shaikh Abu ‘l-Baqā explains why he hesitated at first, before admitting the young Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir into his presence. ☞

Shaikh Maṭir has told us: “One day, I was in the company of our Shaikh, Abu ‘l-Baqā, at his convent [*zāwiya*] in Qalamīniyā, when he said: ‘O Maṭir, lock the door! There is a young fellow outside, a Persian [*A‘jamī*], who is trying to gain admission to my presence, so you must prevent him from doing so!’ I promptly got up to do as I was told, and there, at the door, I saw Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. He was still at young man at that time, and he was indeed seeking admission to Shaikh Abu ‘l-Baqā’s presence. He requested permission to enter,

<sup>61</sup> See note 29 on p. 57 above.

but our Shaikh denied his request. I noticed that our Shaikh was pacing to and fro inside the convent, like someone in a state of confusion, but then he finally granted permission to the visitor. As soon as he saw him, he took several steps toward him, and the two of them embraced in a long-lasting hug.

“O ‘Abd al-Qādir,” our Shaikh said to him, “by the Might and Glory of the One to whom all Might and Glory belong, when I prevented you from entering the first time, it was not because of any rejection of your right and proper due, but rather because of a sense of anxiety about you. But then, as soon as I realized that you would both receive something from me and give something to me, I felt able to relate to you with a strong sense of security.”

May Allāh be well pleased with each of the three Shaikhs mentioned, and may He grant them contentment!

☞ Even while Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is still a very young man, there are some who clearly foresee his future rôle. ☞

It was Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān at-Ṭafsūnjī who said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir used to come, while he was still a young man, to visit our own Shaikh, Tāj al-‘Ārifin Abu ‘l-Wafā. As soon as he saw him, our Shaikh would get up from his seat, and say to those present in his company: ‘Stand up, all of you, in honor of the saintly friend [*walī*] of Allāh!’ He would sometimes take several steps toward him, in order to greet him directly. On another occasion, he would say: ‘If anyone has not stood up, let him stand up now, in honor of the saintly friend of Allāh!’

“Since this was a recurring pattern of behavior, one of our Shaikh’s companions felt moved to comment on its significance. He said: ‘This young man has arrived on the scene at a time when he is sorely needed, both by the privileged élite [*khāṣṣ*] and by the common people [*‘āmm*]. I seem to have a preview of him, speaking to large audiences in Baghdād. He will be fully justified in saying: “This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh.” The necks of all the saints [*awliyā’*] in his day and age will therefore be placed at his disposal,

for he will be their Cardinal Pole [Qutb]. Service to him will be incumbent upon every one of them who is still alive when that moment comes.”

Shaikh Maslama ibn Ni‘mat as-Sarūji (may Allāh be well pleased with him) gave the following reply to someone who asked him, one day, about the Cardinal Pole [Qutb]. “Who is he?” the questioner wanted to know, so the Shaikh said: “He is presently in Mecca, in a state of concealment, so that none but the righteous [ṣāliḥūn] can recognize him. He will eventually make his public appearance over here.” (The speaker pointed in the direction of ‘Irāq.) “He is a young Persian [A‘jamī] of noble ancestry, called ‘Abd al-Qādir. He is splendidly endowed with supernatural charismatic talents [karāmāt khāriqāt]. He is destined to be the Cardinal Pole [Qutb] of his time, and the Spiritual Helper [Ḡhawth] of his age. He will eventually speak to large audiences, and he will be fully justified in saying: ‘This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh.’ All the saints [awliyā’] of his era will certainly bow down beneath that foot of his, through which Allāh will bestow great benefit upon them. They will also benefit from his charismatic talents [karāmāt], as will those ordinary people who believe them to be real.” May Allāh be well pleased with them both [Shaikh Maslama ibn Ni‘mat as-Sarūji and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir].

It was Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī who said: “Our own Shaikh, Abu ‘l- Wafā, was once speaking to the people from up on the lectern, when Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir came in to attend his session [majlis]. Our Shaikh immediately interrupted his speech, and ordered Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir to leave. The visitor went out, and our Shaikh resumed his speech. Then Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir came back to rejoin the session, and again our Shaikh interrupted his speech, and told him to leave. So again he went out, and again our Shaikh resumed his speech. Then Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir came in a third time, but this time Shaikh Abu ‘l-Wafā descended from the lectern, embraced him, and kissed him between the eyes. He turned to his audience and said: ‘Stand up, all of you, in honor of the saintly friend [walī] of Allāh (Exalted is He)!’

“He then went on to explain: ‘O people of Baghdād, when I ordered him to leave, it was not with the intention of insulting him, but rather

to ensure that you would take notice of him. For, by the Might and Glory of the One to Whom all worship is due [*al-Ma'būd*], there are banners hoisted over his head, and their scope extends beyond the East and the West.' Then he said to him: 'O 'Abd al-Qādir, the time belongs to us at present, but it will soon come to be yours. O 'Abd al-Qādir, they have given you 'Irāq, and every rooster will sometimes crow and sometimes fall silent, with the sole exception of your rooster, for it will go on crowing till the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*].' He also presented him with his prayer rug [*sajjāda*], his shirt, his string of prayer-beads [*misbaḥa*], his bowl, and his staff. This was a way of saying: 'Accept him with a solemn commitment!'

"Shaikh Abu 'l-Wafā also said: 'His forehead is marked with the brand of al-Mukharrimī.'<sup>62</sup> Then, when the session had drawn to a close, Shaikh Tāj al-Ārifīn Abu 'l-Wafā stepped down from the lectern, sat on the lowest stair, gripped the hand of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, and said to him, in the midst of the people crowding around: 'O 'Abd al-Qādir, there is a time assigned to you, and when it comes, remember this old graybeard! As he said this, he squeezed his noble hand tightly. May Allāh be well pleased with them both!"

Concerning some of the articles which Shaikh Abu 'l-Wafā presented to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, 'Umar al-Bazzāz informs us:

"As for the string of prayer-beads [*misbaḥa*] which Shaikh Abu 'l-Wafā presented to our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, whenever he set it down on the ground, it would rotate by itself, one bead at a time. After he had died, it passed into the possession of Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī. As for the bowl which he gave him, whenever someone touched it, that person's whole arm would shake and tremble, from his hand right up to his shoulders.

It was Shaikh aṣ-Ṣālīḥ Abū Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Āqūlī who said: "I once made a journey to visit Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir, and as soon as I arrived, he asked me: 'Where have you come from?' When I told him: 'From Baghdād, from among the companions of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir,' he exclaimed: 'Bravo, bravo [*bakh, bakh*]! That 'Abd al-Qādir is the Cardinal Pole [*Quṭb*] of the earth, to whom three hundred saints of Allāh bowed their necks, as well as seven hundred invisible beings, some of them seated on the earth and some of them

<sup>62</sup> See pp. 15–16 above.

flying through the air—all at that one point in time, when he said: ‘This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh.’ That made a profound impression on me.

“Then, after some time had elapsed, I paid a visit to Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī. I mentioned to him what I had heard on that subject from Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir, and he said: ‘Shaikh ‘Adī told you the truth.’”

May Allāh be well pleased with all the Shaikhs concerned.

☞ The righteous among the jinn are also said to have responded to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s declaration. ☞

It was Shaikh Mājid al-Kurdī who said: “When Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir uttered this pronouncement, there was not one single saint of Allāh on the entire earth, at that moment in time, who did not bend his neck in humble recognition of him, and in acknowledgment of his special status. Nor was there one single circle, of all the circles of the righteous among the jinn, assembled at that moment in time, in which mention of it was not made. Delegations of those righteous jinn set forth to visit him, from all the horizons. Saluting him with the greeting of peace, and repenting at his hand, they gathered in a throng at his door.” Shaikh Maṭir is in agreement with Shaikh Mājid al-Kurdī concerning the validity of this report.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s son, Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh, was present when his father made his famous declaration. ☞

[Shaikh Mājid al-Kurdī added]: “When I asked Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh, the son of our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘Were you present at the session [*majlis*] at which your father said: “This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh,” he replied: ‘Yes I was, and those in attendance at that session included approximately fifty Shaikhs, from among those most highly distinguished.’”

“He also said: ‘When Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir left the session and

entered his own apartment, the only Shaikhs remaining were Shaikh Makārim, Shaikh Muḥammad al-Khāṣṣ and Shaikh Aḥmad al-ʿArinī, so we sat together and talked.

“It was Shaikh Makārim who said: “Allāh showed me, on that day, that there was not one single exception—out of all those with whom He had contracted the bond of saintship [*walāʾ al-wilāya*] in the nearest and farthest regions of the earth—who did not witness the banner of Cardinal Poleship [*Qutbiyya*] paraded in front of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir, and the crown of Helpership [*Ghawthiyya*] placed upon his head. There was not one who did not see upon him the robe of honor of complete managerial disposition [*taṣṛīf*] in the realm of existence and its people, with the authority to appoint and dismiss, and this robe was marked with the embroidered insignia of the Sacred Law [*Sharīʿa*] and Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*].

“I heard him say: “This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh,” and each and every one of them bowed his head and humbled his heart toward him, at one and the same moment, including the ten spiritual deputies [*abdāl*], the élite of the kingdom, the Sultans of the age.’ When I asked him who they were, he replied: ‘Baqā ibn Baṭū, Abū Saʿīd al-Qailawī, ʿAlī ibn al-Hitī, ʿAdī ibn Musāfir, Mūsā az-Zuwalī, Aḥmad ibn ar-Rifāʿī, ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī, Abū Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Baṣrī, Ḥayāt ibn Qais al-Ḥarrānī, and Abū Madyan al-Maghribī.’

“Muḥammad al-Khāṣṣ and Shaikh Aḥmad al-ʿArinī said to Shaikh Makārim: “You have told the truth,” and two brothers of mine, Shaikh ʿAbduʾllāh al-Jabbār and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, were also in full agreement with him in that respect.” May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

It was Shaikh al-Qudwa [the Exemplary Guide] Abū Saʿīd al-Qailawī who said: “When Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) declared: ‘This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh,’ the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) made Himself manifest upon his heart, and a robe of honor was conveyed to him from Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), through the agency of a party of the angels who are brought near [to the Lord].

“He donned this robe in the presence of all the saints [*awliyā*’], those of former times and those more recent, those still alive in their physical bodies and those [physically] dead [but alive] in their spirits. The angels and the men of the Unseen [*rijāl al-Ḡhaib*] were circling around his session, stationed in the air in ranks, so that the horizon was obstructed by them. There was not a single saint [*walī*] anywhere on the earth, who did not bend his neck toward him.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ More reports concerning Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s declaration, and how the saints responded to it, including those who were in distant lands at the time. ☞

Shaikh Khalīfat al-Akbar [the Senior] has told us: “I once saw Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in a dream, so I said to him: ‘O Messenger of Allāh, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir has declared: “This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh.”’ ‘Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir has spoken the truth,’ he told me, ‘and how could he not do so, when he is the Cardinal Pole [*Qutb*] and I keep him under my wing?’”

A man came to visit Shaikh al-Qudwa [the Exemplary Guide] Ḥayāt ibn Qais al-Ḥarrānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on Friday, the third of Ramaḍān, in the year [A.H.] 599, in the congregational mosque [*jāmi*’] of Ḥarrān. He asked the Shaikh to accept him as a committed disciple, but the Shaikh said to him: “You seem to bear the stamp of someone other than myself.” “Yes,” he replied, “I did invoke the name of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), but I did not receive a tattered robe [*khirqā*] from him, nor from anyone else.”

Shaikh Ḥayāt then said: “We lived for a long time in the protective shade of the life of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and we have drunk salubrious goblets from the fountains of his spiritual insight [*irfān*]. The breath of truthfulness emanated from him, and the rays of his light blazed on all the horizons. Those who experienced spiritual states [*aṣḥāb al-aḥwāl*] were thereby

enabled to glean secrets from him, in accordance with their levels of development. Then, when he received the commandment to declare: 'This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh,' Allāh (Exalted is He) provided all the saints with even more light in their hearts, with even more blessed grace in their stores of knowledge, and with even higher advancement in their spiritual states, through the blessed grace of their lowering of their heads.

"Now he has passed on to Allāh (Exalted is He), attired in the splendid garb of his predecessors, among the Prophets [*Nabiyyīn*], the champions of the Truth [*ṣiddīqīn*], the martyrs [*shuhadā'*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥīn*]. May Allāh be well pleased with them, each and every one!"

Shaikh Lu'lu' al-Armanī [the Armenian] used to speak while having to gasp for breath. He once said: "When Shaikh Abu 'l-Khair 'Aṭā' al-Miṣrī noticed the intense effort I was making, he said to himself: 'To which of the Shaikhs is he affiliated, I wonder?' I knew what he was thinking, so I told him: 'O 'Aṭā', my own Shaikh is Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, the one who declared: "This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh," and to whom three hundred and thirteen saints of Allāh bowed their heads, on all the horizons of the earth. At that very moment, seventeen of them were at the two Noble Sanctuaries [*Ḥaramain*],<sup>63</sup> while sixty were in 'Irāq, forty in Persia, thirty in Syria, twenty in Egypt, twenty-seven in the Far West, eleven in Ethiopia, seven at the Dam of Gog and Magog [*Sadd Jūj wa Mājūj*], seven in the Valley of Sri Lanka [*Wādī Sarandīb*], forty-seven on Mount Qāf,<sup>64</sup> and twenty-four on the islands of the great encircling ocean.

"More than one of them asserted that Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir did not utter this declaration without having received a command [from the Lord] to do so. Among those who made this assertion are:

- Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir
- Shaikh Abū Sa'īd al-Qailawī
- Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī

<sup>63</sup> That is to say, at the Sacred Mosque in Mecca and at the tomb of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in Medina.

<sup>64</sup> See note 47 on p. 81 above.

- Shaikh Aḥmad ibn ar-Rifāʿī
- Shaikh Abu ʿl-Qāsim al-Baṣrī
- Shaikh Ḥayāt al-Ḥarrānī.

“They also maintained that he was given permission to dismiss [from their position of sainthood] any of the saints [*awliyāʾ*] who might find fault with him for making his declaration.”

According to another report, Shaikh Luʿluʾ al-Armanī said: “I saw the saints in the East and the West, all bowing their heads in profound humility, with the solitary exception of a man in Persia. He did not do it, so his spiritual state evaporated and deserted him. Among those Shaikhs who did bend their necks at that moment, we should mention:

- Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū
- Shaikh Abū Saʿīd al-Qailawī
- Shaikh ʿAlī ibn al-Hitī

• Shaikh Aḥmad ibn ar-Rifāʿī, who stretched out his nape and exclaimed: ‘[That foot is] upon my neck!’ When someone asked him what he was doing, he explained: ‘Just now, in Baghdād, Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir has declared: “This foot of mine is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh.”’

• Shaikh ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī

• Shaikh Abu ʿn-Najīb as-Suhrawardī,<sup>65</sup> who tilted his head so low that it almost touched the ground, as he exclaimed: ‘[That foot is] upon my head!’

- Shaikh Mūsā az-Zuwalī
- Shaikh Ḥayāt al-Ḥarrānī
- Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd
- Shaikh Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Marzūq
- Shaikh Abu ʿl-Karam
- Shaikh Mājid al-Kurdi
- Shaikh Suwaid an-Najjārī

<sup>65</sup> See note 34 on p. 63 above.

• Shaikh Raslān ad-Dimashqī, who bent his neck in Damascus, and told his companions about what had happened. Then he said: ‘To Allāh be attributed the excellence of one who drinks from the oceans of holiness [*quds*], who sits on the carpet of intimate knowledge [*maʿrifa*], and who witnesses the mystery of the magnification of Lordship [*Rubūbiyya*] and the glorification of Uniqueness [*Waḥdāniyya*], so that his personal nature is annihilated in the beholding of Grandeur [*Kibriyāʾ*], and his personal existence becomes extinct in the direct experience of reverential awe. For upon him is conferred the garment of intimate friendship [*uns*], and he ascends through the degrees of providence [*ʿināya*], until he reaches the station of the permanent abode [*maqām al-qarār*], and is wafted to the spot made fragrant by the breezes of the Spirit of Eternity [*Rūḥ al-Azaliyya*]. Then he utters words of wisdom from the sources of radiant lights, and, in the deepest folds of his innermost being [*sirr*], he mingles with the hidden mysteries.

“He is in the state of present awareness as long as he is conscious, and in the state of consciousness even when his ordinary faculties are obliterated. He maintains an attitude of modesty, rejoices in well-mannered behavior, and speaks with humility. He acts boldly when the need arises, and approaches every individual with specific care and attention. He receives his guests with respectful hospitality, for his Lord has endowed him with the most excellent greeting and salutation.’ When someone asked Shaikh Raslān: ‘Are there any in existence who match this description?’ he replied: ‘Yes indeed, and Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) is their leader!’

• Shaikh Abū Madyan al-Maghribī, who inclined his neck to the West [*Maghrib*] and said: ‘Yes, and I am one of them. O Allāh, I call upon You to bear witness, and I call upon the angels to bear witness, that I have heard and obeyed!’

- Shaikh ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Maghribī
- Shaikh Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Marwaza al-Baṭāʾihī
- Shaikh Makārim
- Shaikh Khalīfa
- Shaikh ʿAdī ibn Musāfir.

“It is also worth noting that, at the time of the Shaikh’s pronouncement, a company of saintly beings became visible on all the horizons, flying toward him at the command of al-Khiḍr<sup>66</sup> (peace be upon him), in order to be present for that special occasion.

“From that time on, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was addressed by the saints [*awliyā’*], after the initial greeting of felicitation, with salutations like:

- O King of the Age!
- O Commander of the Realm!
- O Viceroy by the Command of the All-Merciful [*ar-Raḥmān*]!
- O Inheritor of the Book of Allāh, and Deputy of Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace)!
- O he for whom the heaven and the earth are spread as his table [*mā’ida*]!
- O he for whom all the people of his time are his own household!
- O he for whom the rain descends in answer to his prayer, and the udders flow with milk through his blessed grace!

“They never presented themselves in his company without bowing their heads. As for the invisible contingent [*ghaibiyya*], its members stood in front of him in rows, with seventy men to each row. He bore an inscription on the palm of his hand, stating that he had received a firm assurance from Allāh, to the effect that He would never treat him craftily. The angels were constantly walking around him, when he was only ten years of age, hailing him with the good tidings of sainthood [*wilāya*].” (Here ends this report.)

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir uses his staff to check the rising level of the River Tigris. ☞

The level of the River Tigris [*ad-Dijla*] kept rising for several years in succession, until it threatened to flood the city of Baghdād. The townspeople were thoroughly convinced that disaster was close at hand, so they came to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), appealing to him for help and seeking refuge with him. He responded by picking up his staff, and heading for the bank

<sup>66</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

of the river, where he planted the staff at the water's edge. "Up to this point, but no higher!" said he. The water-level diminished from that moment on.

May Allāh be well pleased with him!

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir uses his staff to satisfy a pupil's curiosity. ☞

It was 'Abdu'llāh adh-Dhayyāl who said: "I was standing beside the schoolhouse of Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), one day in the year [A.H.] 560, when he emerged from his private apartment with a staff in his hand. It occurred to me that he might show me some charismatic power [*karāma*] contained within this staff. 'Watch this!' he said to me, with a smile on his face. Then he planted it in the ground, and—lo and behold!—it turned into a light, gleaming ever brighter as it beamed toward the sky, and the whole atmosphere was soon aglow with it. There it remained for a fairly short space of time, then he picked it up, and it returned at once to its previous condition. He turned to me and said: 'O Dhayyāl, was that what you wanted to see?'"

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ According to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, there was only one saint of Allāh, in his day and age, who belonged to the Ḥanafī school [*madhhab*] of Islāmic doctrine. ☞

It was Shaikh Abu 't-Taqī Muḥammad ibn al-Azhar aṣ-Ṣirāfinī who said: "I spent one whole year asking Allāh (Exalted is He) to let me see one of the men of the Unseen [*rijāl al-Gḥaib*]. Then, one night in my dream, I saw myself paying a visit to the tomb of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal<sup>67</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him). I noticed a man beside the tomb, and it occurred to me that he might be one of the men of the Unseen. I woke up at that point, and then I conceived the hope of seeing him again in my waking state, so I set out at once and went to the tomb of the Imām. There I saw that very same man,

<sup>67</sup> See note 53 on p. 90 above.

the one I had seen in my dream, so I made haste to perform my visit, in order to catch him before he left. He did leave ahead of me, however, so I followed him until he reached the Tigris. The two edges of the river rolled together for his convenience, until they were no further than a step apart, so he stepped over the narrow gap and passed across to the other side.

“Uttering a solemn oath, I entreated him to pause and speak to me, so he stopped in his tracks, and I said to him: ‘What is your school of Islāmic legal doctrine [*madhhab*]?’ To this he replied: “I am a man of pure faith [*ḥanīf*], one who has surrendered [to Allāh] [*muslim*], and I am not one of those who attribute partners [to Allāh] [*mushrikīn*].”<sup>68</sup> It occurred to me, as I moved away, that he must belong to the Ḥanafī school of Islāmic doctrine.<sup>69</sup> Then I said to myself: ‘Let me go and visit Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and tell him about all that I have seen.’ I went at once to his schoolhouse, and stood by his door. He did not open the door, but I heard him calling to me from inside his private apartment: ‘O Muḥammad, nowhere on earth, from the East to the West in this day and age, is there any saint of Allāh (Exalted is He) who belongs to the Ḥanafī school of Islāmic doctrine—apart from the one you encountered (may Allāh be well pleased with him).”

☞ A pupil comes to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir from Jerusalem, covering the distance with a single stride. ☞

“On one occasion, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir mounted the steps to the lectern as usual, but then he did not speak, and the Qur’ān-reciter did not recite. The people experienced a tremendous ecstasy [*wajd*], and a sense of exaltation overwhelmed them. ‘What can this mean?’ wondered some of those present, so the Shaikh explained: ‘A pupil of mine has just arrived here, coming all the way from Jerusalem [*Bait al-Maqdis*] with a single stride, and he has repented at my hand. For those in attendance here today, this is an opportunity to participate in his reception as a guest.’ The question then arose in someone’s

<sup>68</sup> This is a clear allusion to the verses of the Qur’ān: 3:67 and 6:80

<sup>69</sup> The Ḥanafī *madhhab*, which is one of the four Sunnī schools of Islāmic legal doctrine, was founded by Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (d. A.H. 150/767 C.E.).

mind: 'If such is the spiritual state of this person, of what can he need to repent?' The Shaikh answered his question by saying: 'He experienced the state of walking through the air, but he cannot return to it, and he needs me to teach him the path that leads to love [*maḥabba*].'

☞ Some important sayings uttered by Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir in the course of his sessions, including:  
"I am the Shaikh of the angels, of human beings and of the jinn." ☞

"The Shaikh himself (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would sometimes walk through the air above the heads of the audience at his session [*majlis*], and he used to say: 'The sun does not rise until it has saluted me with the greeting of peace, nor does the year begin, nor the month, nor any of the days, without first giving me that greeting, and informing me of what is to happen in them. The wretched and the fortunate are paraded before me in review. My eye is upon the Well-kept Tablet [*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*], and I am deeply immersed in the oceans of its knowledge and witnessing. I am a proof against you. I am the deputy [*nā'ib*] of Allāh's Messenger, and his heir [*wārith*] on the earth.'

"He also used to say: 'Every saint [*walī*] is treading in the footsteps of a Prophet [*Nabī*], and I am treading in the footsteps of my forefather [Muḥammad] (Allāh bless him and give him peace). Wherever he raised a foot, I have set my own foot in its place, unless it is one of the footsteps peculiar to the office of Prophethood [*Nubuwwa*].' May Allāh be well pleased with him!

"He once said (may Allāh be well pleased with him): 'I am the Shaikh of the angels, of human beings and of the jinn.'<sup>70</sup>

"On one occasion, while speaking from the lectern, the Shaikh said: 'If you ask Allāh (Exalted is He) for something, ask it of him on my account. O people of the earth, both East and West, come here and learn from me! O people of 'Irāq, the states of spiritual progress are here with me, like clothes suspended on hangers in a wardrobe. Whichever of them you wish to wear, you are welcome to try them

<sup>70</sup> *ana Shaikh al-malā'ika wa 'l-ins wa 'l-jinn.*

on! You had better make peace, otherwise I shall come to you with troops, which you have no power to resist. O young man, you must make a journey of a thousand years, in order to hear a word from me! O young man, the offices of sainthood [*wilāyāt*] are here, and the degrees of spiritual status [*darajāt*] are here! The robes of honor are distributed during my session, and there is no Prophet created by Allāh (Exalted is He), nor any saint, who has not attended this session of mine—the living in their physical bodies, and the dead in their spirits [*arwāḥ*]. O young man, remember to ask [the interrogating angels] Munkar and Nakir about me, when they come to you in your grave, for they will tell you all about me!”

It was the Shaikh’s personal servant, Abu ’r-Riḍā, who said: “My master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), was speaking one day about the spirit [*rūḥ*]. Then he fell silent. Then he sat down. Then he stood up again and said [in poetic verse]:

My spirit learned to love you all in pre-eternity,  
before its coming-to-be, while still in nonexistence.  
Is it proper for me, after coming to know you,  
that my foot should leave the paths of your affection?

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir interrupts his sermon from the pulpit, and demands a hundred gold coins! ☞

The same Abu ’r-Riḍā also said: “The Shaikh was speaking in the pulpit one day, on the subject of loving care [*īthār*]. Then his eyes glazed, and he fell silent. Then he said: ‘I shall not speak another word, unless I am paid a hundred *dīnārs*!’ That sum of gold coins was promptly brought to him, while the people waited in puzzled amazement. Then he called out: ‘O Abu ’r-Riḍā!’ so I replied: ‘Doubly at your service [*labbaik*]!’ and he said: ‘Go at once to the Shūniziyya graveyard. There you will find an old man playing the lute [*ūd*]. Give him this gold, and fetch him here to me!’

“So off I went, and I did find an old man standing there, playing the lute. I saluted him with the greeting of peace, and duly handed him the gold, whereupon he uttered a scream and fell down in a fainting fit. As soon as he regained his senses, I said to him: ‘Whoever you

may be, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is inviting you.’ So he came along with me, and when I had brought him to the appointed place, the Shaikh said: ‘Send him up into the pulpit.’ He climbed the steps, with the lute slung over his shoulder, and the Shaikh then said to him: ‘Whoever you may be, tell us your story!’

“The old man responded by saying: ‘O my master, when I was still in my early youth, I used to sing very sweetly, and I could always count on a warm reception. But then old age caught up with me, and there was nobody left who would pay me the slightest attention. I therefore moved out of Baghdād, and I said to myself: “From now on, I shall only sing to the dead!” While I was moving around amongst them [in the graveyard], I sat down next to a certain tomb, and—lo and behold—it split open, and out popped the man buried inside it, up to his head. ‘Whoever you may be,’ he said, ‘how much longer will you go on singing to the dead? Stand up and sing to the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining One [*al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm*], just one time, for then He will give you whatever you ask of Him!’ This caused me to swoon, but then I got up and found myself saying [in poetic verse]:

O my Lord, I have nothing to offer, on the Day of the Meeting,  
but the hope of my heart and the speech of my tongue.  
To You the hopeful repair, yearning for gracious favor,  
so alas for them if they must suffer deprivation!  
If only the righteous can hope to receive Your blessing,  
how can the sinner find refuge and protection?  
My old age will be ugly on my Day of Review and the Meeting,  
so perhaps You will deliver me from the Fires of Hell.

“While I was standing there, along came your servant, bringing me these hundred dinārs. I am ready now to repent to Allāh (Exalted is He).’ Then he broke the lute, and repented. The Shaikh turned to his audience and said: ‘O spiritual paupers [*fuqarā’*], since this old man told the truth, if only for amusement, his Lord gave him what he wanted. How then will the situation be, in the case of someone who is truthful in his spiritual poverty [*faqr*], his spiritual path [*ṭarīq*], and all his spiritual states [*aḥwāl*]?’ Then he went on to say: ‘It is essential for you to practice truthfulness [*ṣidq*] and sincerity [*ṣafa’*], for without these two virtues, no human being can draw near

to Allāh (Exalted is He). Surely you must have heard the saying of the Lord of Truth (Exalted is He):

And if you give your word, you must act fairly.  
*wa idhā qultum fa-'dilū.* (6:153)

“In other words, you must truly mean what you say.’

“When the Shaikh first demanded the gold, forty men stepped forward, each one of them ready to give him a hundred *dinārs*, but he would only accept the money from one particular man. Later on, when the singer declared his repentance, the rest of the people gave him what they had offered to the Shaikh. Due to this whole experience, five individuals died on that very day.

“May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!”

### ☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir visits the tomb of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās. ☞

We owe the following report to al-Kīmānī, al-Bazzāz, and Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī, commonly known as as-Saqqā’ [the Water Bearer]. They said:

“Our Shaikh, Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), paid a visit to the graveyard of ash-Shūnizī on Wednesday, the twenty-seventh of Dhu ‘l-Ḥijja, in the year [A.H.] 529. He was accompanied by a considerable number of the Islāmic jurists [*fuqahā’*] and the Qur’ān-reciters [*qurrā’*]. At the graveyard, he stopped beside the tomb of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and stood there for a long time, until the heat grew too intense for the people standing behind him. Then he moved away, and a joyful expression was apparent on his face. When asked about the reason for that, and for the length of his standing by the tomb, he explained:

“I had gone out of Baghdād one Friday, in the middle of Sha‘bān in the year [A.H.] 490, together with a group of the companions of Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās (may Allāh be well pleased with him), for the purpose of performing the congregational prayer [*jum‘a*] in the large mosque [*jāmi‘*] at ar-Ruṣāfa. The Shaikh himself was

also with us. When we were at the Bridge of the Jews [*Qanṭarat al-Yahūd*], my commandant pushed me into the water. This happened in the bitter cold of winter. I exclaimed: 'In the Name of Allāh, I intend to perform the major ritual ablution for the Friday prayer [*ghusl al-jum'a*].' I was wearing a long garment [*jubba*] made of wool, with an extra piece of clothing tucked up my sleeve, so I held up my hand to keep this from getting wet. Meanwhile, my companions had left me and moved on, so I emerged from the water, squeezed the *jubba* dry, and followed after them. I was in agonizing pain from the cold, and the Shaikh's companions felt themselves smugly superior to me, but he chided them, saying: 'If I make him suffer, I do so only to put him to the test, for I see him as an immovable mountain.'

"Well, I saw Shaikh Ḥammād today in his tomb, and he was clad in a fine suit made of light, studded with jewels. On his head was a crown of sapphire, on his arms were bracelets of gold, and on his feet were sandals of gold. His right hand was not amenable to his control, however, so I asked him: 'What is the matter with this?'—meaning the hand—and he told me: 'This is the hand with which I threw you [into the icy water], so are you forgiving enough to pardon me for that?' When I said that I was indeed, he went on to say: 'Then ask Allāh (Exalted is He) to restore it to my control!' So I stood there all that time, begging Allāh (Exalted is He) to grant that request. Five thousand of the saints of Allāh (Exalted is He) were also standing in their tombs, begging Allāh (Exalted is He) to accept the plea I was making on his behalf, and lending me their support to make the plea complete. Thus I continued to plead with Allāh (Exalted is He), standing there all the while, till the moment when Allāh (Exalted is He) finally restored his hand to his control, and he used it to shake me by the hand. His happiness was thereby rendered complete, and so was my own happiness.'

"As soon as the news of this spread throughout Baghdād, a gathering took place, in which all the elders and Ṣūfis residing in the city, from among the companions of Shaikh Ḥammād, decided to approach Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and ask him to tell them the true version of what he had said.

Many other people followed them, from among the spiritual paupers, and they all came to the schoolhouse. Not one of them said a word, however, out of profound respect for him, but the Shaikh had anticipated their desire, and he said to them: 'Select two men from among the elders, from whose tongues you will receive a clear account of what I have to tell, if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills.' They all agreed on the choice of Shaikh Yūsuf al-Hamadānī, who had arrived in Baghdād on that very day, and of Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Kurdī, who was a resident of Baghdād. May Allāh be well pleased with them both, for these two were among the people endowed with penetrating insight and excellent spiritual states.

"Once they had chosen their representatives, the elders said to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir: 'We shall leave you alone with them now, then meet with the two of them later, to hear what they have to report.' But the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) exclaimed: 'Oh no! You must not leave this place yet. You must stay right where you are, until the business has been dealt with to your entire satisfaction, if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills.' Then he bowed his head toward the ground, and they all bowed their heads. The paupers gave a loud cry from outside the schoolhouse, to signal the arrival of Shaikh Yūsuf, who came along barefooted, running as fast as he could, until he entered the schoolhouse and said: 'Just a short while ago, Allāh (Exalted is He) made me realize that Shaikh Ḥammād (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had said: "Hurry along at once to the schoolhouse of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, and convey this message to the elders assembled there: 'Shaikh Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir told the truth exactly, when he reported what I said to him.'""

"Shaikh Yūsuf had barely finished speaking, when along came Shaikh Abū Muḥammad 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Kurdī, who repeated what Shaikh Ḥammād had said. All of those present thereupon got up to take their leave, while seeking forgiveness with respect to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.

May Allāh be well pleased with him, and with them, and may He also be well pleased with us, on their account!"

☞ On the Night of [the Granting of] Wishes  
[*Lailat ar-Raghā'ib*], an enormous light  
is seen to emanate from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. ☞

As we are told by [Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's sons] Shaikh 'Abd al-Wahhāb and Shaikh 'Abd ar-Razzāq: "It was on Friday, the fifth of Rajab,<sup>71</sup> that Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū came early in the morning to visit our father's schoolhouse. He said to us: 'During the night, I saw an enormous light shining forth, and I realized that it was emanating from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. Not a single angel came down to the earth, in the course of the night, without calling on him to greet him, and the name by which they know him is "The Witness and the Witnessed [*ash-Shāhid wa 'l-Mashhūd*]."' We thereupon went to our father and asked him: 'During the night, did you perform the Ritual Prayer of [the Granting of] Wishes [*Ṣalāt ar-Raghā'ib*].' In answer to our question, he recited these poetic verses:

When my eye beholds the faces of my lady-loves,  
that is my ritual prayer on the Nights of Wishes Granted.

When the veil is removed from the beauty of those faces,  
the universe shines bright for them from every quarter.

Contentment I could not enjoy, did I not shed my blood,  
while rubbing shoulders with brave heroes of the fray.

I break the ranks of the knowing ones with firm resolve,  
for my honor is exalted high above those grades of status.

If someone fails to give love its due, he does not deserve it,  
for that is one who never carries out a binding duty.

<sup>71</sup> In the encyclopedic work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above (Vol. 3, p. 38, of the Al-Baz edition), Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) quotes the following saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

It is most important...that none of you should neglect the first Friday night in Rajab, for it is the night that the angels call the Night of [the Granting of] Wishes [*Lailat ar-Raghā'ib*]. This is because, by the time the first third of the night has elapsed, there will not be a single angel still at large in the heavens, nor in any region of the earth bar one. They will all be gathered together in the Ka'ba and the area immediately surrounding it. Allāh (Exalted is He) will condescend to notice that they have assembled there, and He will say: "My angels, ask Me for whatever you wish!" Their response to this will be: "Our Lord, the request we wish to make is that You grant forgiveness to those who faithfully keep the fast in Rajab," whereupon Allāh (Exalted is He) will tell them: "That I have already done!"

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir answers some questions about himself and his spiritual experiences. ☞

“When the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) heard the request: ‘Describe for us something of what you have experienced, from among the spiritual states of both the initial and the ultimate stages of this business, so that we may be guided by it,’ he responded with these poetic verses:

I long for one whose description closely matches that  
of a hero who bestows his grace with gracious kindness;  
For one who converses with the Lovers about their secrets,  
from every subtle aspect that I have failed to discover;  
For one by whose blend of drink I used to be inebriated,  
but whose purity makes me sober today in his presence;  
For one at whose first glance I used to lose my direction,  
but today I find it clarified, so I follow it to my destination.

“Some people once said to the Shaikh: ‘We keep the fast, just as you keep the fast. We perform the ritual prayer, just as you perform the ritual prayer. We exert our faculties with diligence, just as you exert your faculties with diligence. Yet we do not experience any element of your spiritual states!’ He responded to their complaint by telling them: ‘You have vied with us in actions, so now you must vie with us in talents! By Allāh, I never eat until I hear the command: ‘In accordance with My right over you, eat up!’ I never drink until I hear the command: ‘In accordance with My right over you, drink up!’ I never do anything at all, unless I am ordered to do it [by my Lord].’

“He also said (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘During the time of my spiritual struggle [*mujāhada*], whenever a bout of slumber overtook me, I would hear a Speaker saying to me: “O ‘Abd al-Qādir, I did not create you for sleep! We brought you to life when you were nothing, so do not neglect Us now that you are something!”’”

☞ A mysterious visitor settles Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s financial debts. ☞

We owe this next report to Shaikh Abu ‘n-Najā al-Baghdādī, commonly known as al-Ḥaṭṭāb [the Woodcutter], who was the

personal servant of our master, Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He said:

“At a certain point in time, my master Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir had an accumulated debt of two hundred and fifty dinārs [gold coins], this being the amount he owed to various artisans and tradesmen. Then along came a person, someone totally unfamiliar to me, who entered the Shaikh's presence without permission, sat for quite a long time in his company, and then handed him some gold, saying: 'This is to clear the debt.' He left without further ado, and the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) immediately instructed me to deliver the payment due to each of his creditors. When I asked: 'O my master, who is this man?' he replied: 'The cashier of destiny [*ṣairafī al-qadar*].' 'And what,' said I, 'is the cashier of destiny?' The Shaikh said: 'An angel who is sent by Allāh (Exalted is He) to settle the account of any of the saints [*awliyā*]' who happens to be in debt.'

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

### ☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir surprises his personal servant, Abu 'r-Riḍā. ☞

It was Abu 'r-Riḍā, also a personal servant of his, who said: “I knocked one night on the door of his private chamber, but he did not speak to me, so I opened the door and went inside. I saw no sign of him at first, but then he came down to me from the roof of his chamber, while pronouncing these poetic verses:

My yearnings circled the Ka'ba of the beauty you all share,  
then I bowed down thankful to the Majesty Unending.

I cast into my heart the pebbles of your affection,  
with the hand of longing, yet I remained in a state of burning.

As a drunkard of love's ardor, I am constantly in a daze;  
if only I knew what it was that the cupbearer set me to drinking!

### ☞ A shower of rain steers clear of the audience attending Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's session. ☞

As we are told by Shaikh 'Adī ibn Abi 'l-Barakāt, his father told him: “That exemplary guide, my paternal uncle, Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) told me: ‘On one

occasion, while Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was giving a speech, a shower of rain descended from the sky. This caused some members of his audience to disperse, so he raised his head toward the heaven above, and said: 'Here am I, gathering people together for Your sake, and You are scattering them away from me like this!' The rain at once stopped falling on the courtyard where the session was taking place. Though the downpour continued unabated beyond the perimeter of the schoolhouse, not a single drop of rain fell on the session.

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir comes to be known as  
"The Falcon [*al-Bāz*]." ☞

These are some of the poetic verses uttered by the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

Whatever source of sweetness exists in love intense,  
mine is the most delicious and the most delicate.

However special any rank may be in love's embrace,  
my station is yet more splendid and more intimate.

The days have bestowed on me their lustrous purity,  
so the drink from their springs is pleasing to the palate.

I am now the fiancé of every noble lady, who has not  
been discovered and proposed to by an eligible candidate.

I am the kind of man whose comrade is never worried,  
and can never see any reason to be afraid or hesitate.

For such there is an escorting retinue in every army,  
and in every domain of dignity they hold a lofty estate.

As the nightingale of all young birds, I fill their nests  
with song, and as the Gray Falcon<sup>72</sup> I soar and levitate.

The armies of love are subject to my will, obedient,  
gallant, and ever intact, so that they never separate.

I abstained from entertaining hope and expectation,  
or looking for something promised on a certain date.

<sup>72</sup> "The Gray Falcon [*al-Bāz al-Ashhab*]" is an epithet by which Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) is widely known. Since the falcon always does the bidding of its master, without question, and returns directly to his hand, this bird has come to symbolize the faithful servant of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

I continued to graze in the pastures of contentment,  
 until I was granted a status that has no duplicate.  
 Then Time became like a garment finely embroidered,  
 we being the gilded stitches that made it immaculate.  
 The suns of the ancients have set, but our own Sun,  
 in its orbit up on high, will never cease to radiate.

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: "All the other birds talk, but they do not act, whereas the falcon [*al-bāz*] acts, and does so without talking. This explains how the glove of kings came to be its perch." Abu 'l-Muẓaffar Maṣṣūr ibn al-Mubārak Jarāda addressed him as "The Falcon [*al-Bāz*]" in these poetic verses:

The months take delight in you, and so do all the moments,  
 O you by whose words the sapphires gain in value!  
 The Falcon [*al-Bāz*] are you, so if you should boast it would not be vain conceit,  
 for other people in my sight are turtledoves at best.  
 I detect from your feet the scent of truthfulness, surprisingly,  
 since that foot belongs to one whose sandal is celebrity.

The reference to vain conceit reminds us that 'Abdu'llāh al-Jubbā'ī once said: "The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was speaking one day about deliverance from vain conceit [*'ujb*],<sup>73</sup> when he turned to me and said: 'If you recognize that all things are from Allāh, and that it is He who has enabled you to do what is good, and if you extract yourself from discordant separateness [*bain*], you will be rescued from vain conceit.'"

☞ The young Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Umar as-Suhrawardī  
 is an eager student of theology, until his uncle takes  
 him to visit Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. ☞

It was the Shaikh of the Ṣūfis, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Umar as-Suhrawardī,<sup>74</sup> who said: "While still a young man, I was actively

<sup>73</sup> In the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has devoted an important section to the subject of vain conceit [*'ujb*] and related vices. (See Vol. 3, pp. 337-50, of the Al-Baz edition.)

<sup>74</sup> Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Umar as-Suhrawardī (A.H. 539/1145 C.E.—A.H. 632/1234 C.E.) is generally regarded as the founder of the Ṣūfī order known as the *Ṭarīqa Suhrawardiyya*, although its origins can be traced back to his uncle, Shaikh Ḍiḡā' ad-Dīn Abu 'n-Najīb as-Suhrawardī (see note 34 on p. 63 above). May Allāh be well pleased with both uncle and nephew!

engaged in the study of Islāmic theology [*‘ilm al-kalām*]. I committed several books on the subject to memory, and became quite an expert in the field. My paternal uncle tried to discourage my interest in it, but I would not be discouraged. He went one day, taking me along with him, to pay a visit to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). ‘O ‘Umar,’ my uncle said to me, ‘Allāh (Exalted is He) has told us in the Qur’ān:

O you who believe,  
*yā ayyuha ’lladhīna āmanū*  
 when you confer with the Messenger,  
*idhā nājaitumu ’r-Rasūla*  
 offer an alms-gift before your conference.  
*fa-qaddimū bainā yadai najwā-kum ṣadaqa.* (58:12)

—Well, here we are, about to enter the presence of a man whose heart has experience of Allāh (Exalted is He). You had better consider how you ought to be in his company, in order to obtain the blessed benefits of his favorable attention.’

“As soon as we had taken our seats, my uncle said to the Shaikh: ‘O my master, this is my brother’s son. He is actively engaged in the study of Islāmic theology [*‘ilm al-kalām*], and despite my having forbidden him to pursue it, he refuses to give it up.’ The Shaikh then asked me: ‘O ‘Umar, which book on the subject have you committed to memory?’ I said: ‘The book entitled such-and-such, and the book entitled such-and-such....’ When I came to the end of the list, he placed his blessed hand on my breast, and—by Allāh!—once he had withdrawn it, I could not remember a single sentence out of all those books. Allāh had made me forget all the topics discussed therein, and Allāh had implanted esoteric knowledge [*‘ilm ladunī*] in my breast, all in an instant. I stood up in front of the Shaikh, and found myself uttering words of wisdom! ‘O ‘Umar,’ he said to me: ‘You are the last of those to acquire fame in ‘Irāq.’”

Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Umar as-Suhrawardī also said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was the Sulṭān of the people of the Spiritual Path [*ahl aṭ-Ṭarīq*], the governor general of existence [*mutaṣarrif al-wujūd*], in actual fact.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ Stories about Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir strike Abu 'l-Faraj as farfetched, until the two of them meet at the afternoon prayer. ☞

It was Abu 'l-Faraj al-Ḥamāmī who said: "I would often hear things about Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, things that I considered highly unlikely to have happened, and I used to deny them and dismiss them as unfounded. On that very account, however, I found myself longing to meet him. I happened to go to the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Azaj*], to attend to some business I had there, and on my way back, as I passed by Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's schoolhouse, I heard the muezzin [*mu'adhdhin*] announcing that the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] was about to begin. The announcement [*iqāma*] brought me to my senses, arousing me from my selfish concerns, so I said to myself: 'I am going to perform the afternoon prayer [*ʿaṣr*], and I shall offer the Shaikh the greeting of peace.' It quite slipped my mind that I was in need of a minor ritual ablution [*wuḍū'*].

"The Shaikh duly led us in performing the afternoon prayer. Then, as soon the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] and the supplication [*du'ā'*] had been completed, he approached me and said: 'Hey, my young son, if you had deliberately given me priority over your personal need, I would have passed judgment in your favor. As it is, however, your condition is that of total negligence, since you have just performed the prayer without the necessary ablution. You let that slip your mind completely!' Amazement overwhelmed me, as I witnessed the spiritual state of the Shaikh. I was utterly astonished, and my mind was baffled, because he had recognized something in my condition that was hidden from my own awareness, until he told me about it. From that moment on, I clung to his companionship, attached myself to him in loving affection and service, and thus came to experience the full scope of his blessed grace."

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir offers advice to a would-be recluse. ☞

It was al-Jubbā'ī who said: "I used to listen to Ibn Nāṣir, as he gave readings from the book entitled *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Finery of the Saints]. My heart was softened and moved by what I heard, and I said within myself: 'I feel inclined to isolate myself from my fellow

creatures, in the seclusion of a retreat [*zāwiya*], and to devote myself to worshipful service [*‘ibāda*].’ I went to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s place, and performed the ritual prayer behind him. After the prayer, I sat in front of him, and he looked at me and said: ‘If you propose to go into isolation, do not seclude yourself until you are suitably prepared for it. You need to spend time in the company of the Shaikhs, and receive training from them, for only then will it become appropriate for you to practice isolation. Otherwise, if you go off and seclude yourself before you are suitably prepared for it, you will be a chicken that has not yet grown its feathers. If you encounter some difficult problem in connection with your religion [*dīn*], you must therefore come out from your place of retreat, and seek the advice of people qualified to address your religious concerns. At his best, the person secluded in a retreat [*zāwiya*] should be like a candle, the light of which is a source of illumination.’”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir delivers a dramatic rebuke to an Imām of the ‘Abbāsīd dynasty. ☞

We owe this next report to Shaikh Abu ‘l-‘Abbās al-Khaḍīr al-Ḥusain al-Mawṣilī, who said: “One night, we were in the schoolhouse of our Shaikh, Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), in Baghdād. While we were there, along came Imām al-Mustanjid-bi’llāh Abu ‘l-Muẓaffar Yūsuf, the son of Imām al-Muqtafi-li-Amri’llāh Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad al-‘Abbāsī. He saluted the Shaikh with the greeting of peace, and told him that he had come to seek his wise advice. He then set down before him a large sum of money, contained in ten vessels, borne by ten of his personal servants. ‘I have no need of this,’ said the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), but the visitor insisted that he must accept it, and pressed the matter with great urgency.

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then grasped one vessel in his right hand, and another in his left. They were the best and finest of vessels, by the way. He squeezed them extremely tightly, till they began to drip with blood. Then the Shaikh said to his visitor: ‘O Abu ‘l-Muẓaffar, do you not feel any sense of shame

before Allāh (Exalted is He), that you should take wealth from the people and offer it to me?" He fainted when he heard this, and the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) went on to say: "By all that is due to Allāh, were it not for the sanctity of his ancestral connection with Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), I would have let the blood go on flowing all the way to his house!"

☞ Heretics are moved to repent at Shaikh  
‘Abd al-Qādir’s hand. ☞

Shaikh al-Qudwa Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Qurashī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has told us: "I was present at the session held by our master, Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), on a certain occasion in the year [A.H.] 559. While I was there, he received a visit from a group belonging to the Rāfiḍa sect, who brought with them two large baskets, stitched up and sealed. When they asked him: 'What is inside these two baskets?' he stepped down from the lectern, and placed his hand on one of the two. 'Inside this one,' he said, 'there is a young boy, a cripple.' He instructed his own son, ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, to open the basket, so he opened it at once, and it was seen to contain exactly what the Shaikh had said. He took the boy by the hand, and told him: 'Stand up, with Allāh's permission!' The boy stood up immediately, and started to run about.

"The Shaikh then placed his hand on the second basket, and said: 'This one contains another young boy, but he has no physical disability.' As before, he instructed his son to open it, and there was indeed a small boy inside it, who promptly stood up and started walking. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) grabbed him by the forelock, and said to him: 'Sit down and be paralyzed, by the command of Allāh (Exalted is He)!' The heretics all repented of their heresy [*rafḍ*] at the hand of the Shaikh, and three individuals died in the course of that session."

Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Qurashī also said: "I was present in Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s company one day, when he asked me to

attend to some need of his, so I wasted no time in dealing with the matter to his satisfaction. He then said to me: 'Ask me for anything you want,' so I told him: 'I wish I could experience such-and-such and such-and-such,' and I mentioned to him a certain matter pertaining to the inner domain [*bāṭin*]. 'Receive it as your own,' he told me, and I experienced it for myself at that very moment."

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's equerry tells about the Shaikh and the scorpion, and how the Shaikh helped him cope with the high cost of living in Baghdād. ☞

Ṣāliḥ Abu -l'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurashī was the equerry in charge of the stable of Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). It was he who said: "Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) went out riding one day, and he rode as far as the al-Manṣūrī congregational mosque [*jāmi'*], then turned around and came back to the school-house. On his return, he lifted his headscarf clear of his face, plucked a scorpion [*aqrab*] from his forehead, and flung the creature down. It scuttled about on the ground, and he said to it: 'Drop dead, by Allāh's leave (Exalted is He)!' The scorpion died on the spot. Then he turned to me and said: 'O Aḥmad, this creature stung me sixty times, between the mosque and here!'

It was this same equerry who said: "I once complained to the Shaikh about the hard time I was having, trying to support a family and all that, what with the high cost of living in Baghdād. He went and fetched me a measure of wheat. 'Put this inside an empty, clay-lined beehive [*kuwāra*],' he told me, 'then block the top of the hive, and make an opening in the side of it. Take out what you need, and grind it, but don't go making any changes!' We ate from it for five whole years, then my wife opened it up. She found it in exactly the same condition as the first time, and it lasted for seven more days. When I told the Shaikh what had happened, he said: 'If only you had left it in its original condition, you could all have gone on eating from it till you died!'

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir stresses the confidential nature of his sessions. ☞

‘Umar ibn Ḥusain ibn Khalil aṭ-Ṭayyib has told us: “On one occasion, when I was present in the company of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, I was sitting in a position that gave me a clear view of his face. I noticed something shaped like a crystal lamp, which descended from the sky until it came close to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s mouth. Then it turned around and shot back up at high speed. This happened three times, so I could not restrain myself from exclaiming: ‘I must tell the people!’ I was so carried away by my astonishment, that it simply blurted out of me. The Shaikh said: ‘Sit still! These sessions are held in accordance with the rules of confidentiality.’ That is why I did not speak of it until after his death.”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir works at loosening knots. ☞

It was Yaḥyā ibn Janāḥ al-Adīb [the Man of Letters] who said: “I once said to myself: ‘I wish that I could count how many times the Shaikh plucks a thread from his gown, in the course of conducting a session!’ When I next attended a session, I took with me a piece of string, and each time he plucked a thread, I tied a knot in my string, which I kept hidden under my shirt. I was one of the people who stayed on till the very end of the session, and it was then that he said to me: ‘Here am I, loosening knots, while you are busy tying them!’”

☞ A student of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is present when, under very strange circumstances, the Shaikh initiates one of the Spiritual Deputies [Abdāl]. ☞

We owe this next report to Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan, commonly known as Ibn as-Siṭanṭina [“Son of ‘Stantinople”] al-Baghdādī, who said: “I was actively engaged in the pursuit of religious knowledge [‘ilm], as a student of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). I used to spend much of the night without sleep, keeping myself at the ready in case he needed anything. One

night in the month of Şafar, in the year [A.H.] 553, he emerged from his private apartment, so I fetched him a jug. He did not take it from me, however, but headed toward the door of schoolhouse. The intervening door was open to him, so he went out, and I went out behind him, saying to myself: 'He seems quite unaware of my presence!'

"The schoolhouse door was locked, and he just kept walking, all the way to the city gate of Baghdād. The gate was open to him, so he went out of the city, and I went out behind him. By the time he turned back, however, the gate had been locked, so he started walking again. Before he had gone very far, we found ourselves in a town that was unfamiliar to me. He entered a place that closely resembled his own guesthouse [*ribāṭ*], and there were six individuals inside it, who promptly welcomed him with the greeting of peace.

"I propped myself against a column there, and I could hear a moaning sound issuing from the side of that place. We had only been there a very short time, however, when that moaning sound fell silent. A man came in, and headed toward the part of the building from which that moaning sound had emanated. Then he reemerged, with a corpse slung over his shoulder. Another man came in at that point, bareheaded, and with a long-haired mustache. He sat in front of the Shaikh, and the Shaikh accepted from him the two declarations of faith [*shahādatain*],<sup>75</sup> trimmed the hair of his mustache and his head, gave him a white cotton skullcap [*tāqiyya*] to wear, and named him Muḥammad. The Shaikh then said to the group of six: 'I have received the command that this should be a substitute [*badal*] for the dead man.' They all said: 'To hear is to obey!' Then he went out and left them, and I walked out behind him. Before we had walked very far, we found ourselves back at the city gate of Baghdād, and the gate stood open, as it had been the first time around. The Shaikh then went to the schoolhouse, where the door now stood open, and he entered his private apartment.

"When the next day came, I sat in the presence of the Shaikh, in order to continue my studies. Uttering a solemn oath, I begged him

<sup>75</sup> The two declarations of faith [*shahādatain*] are: "I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh [*ashhadu an lā ilāha illa 'llāh*]," and: "I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh [*ashhadu anna Muḥammadan Rasūlu 'llāh*]."

to explain to me what I had witnessed, so he told me: 'As for the town, it is Nihāwand, in one of the provincial districts. As for the six men you saw there, they are the noble Spiritual Deputies [*Abdāl*]. The moaning sound came from the seventh of their number. He was seriously ill, so when his dying moment was at hand, I came to keep him company. As for the man from whom I accepted the two declarations of faith [*shahādatain*], he is a citizen of Constantinople [*Qusṭantīniyya*], who had been a Christian until then. I received the command that he should be a substitute for the dead man, so he was brought there. He embraced Islām at my hand, and he is now one of their number. As for the man who came in, and then went out with a corpse slung over his shoulder, he is Abu 'l-'Abbās al-Khiḍr.<sup>76</sup> He took the body away with him, in order to attend to its funeral preparations.'

"After telling me all this, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) made me vow that I would not repeat it to anyone, as long as he was still alive. He said: 'Beware of divulging the secret during my lifetime!'

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ In obedience to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's command, the king of the jinn helps a man to recover his abducted daughter. ☞

We owe this next report to Abū Sa'īd 'Abdu'llāh ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Baghdādī al-Azajī, who said: "In the year [A.H.] 537, a daughter of mine called Fāṭima went up onto the roof of a house, and from there she was abducted. She was still a virgin, and she was only sixteen years old. When I went to Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir, and told him what had happened, he said: 'You must go during the night to the wasteland of al-Karkh, sit down beside the fifth hill, and draw a circle around you on the ground. While you are drawing it, you must say: "In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate [*Bismi 'llāhi 'r-Raḥmāni 'r-Raḥīm*], in accordance with the intention [*niyya*] of 'Abd al-Qādir." Then, in the pitch-black phase of the night, parties of the jinn will pass by you, in various

<sup>76</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

shapes and forms. You must not be disturbed by anything about them. Later on, in the period shortly before daybreak, their king will pass by you, in the midst of a legion of them, and he will ask you what need of yours has brought you there. You must tell him: “‘Abd al-Qādir sent me to you,” and let him know what happened to your daughter.’

“I went to the spot the Shaikh had described, and carried out his instructions to the last detail. The jinn passed by me in various shapes and forms, alarming to the beholder, but none of them was able to get close to me, nor even to the circle I had drawn on the ground. They kept coming and going, troop after troop, until their king arrived on the scene. He was riding on a horse, preceded by whole communities of the jinn. When he reached the circle, he came to a halt, and said: ‘O human being, what need of yours has brought you here?’ So I told him: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir sent me to you.’ As soon as he heard mention of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he dismounted from his horse, kissed the ground, and sat down outside the circle. Those who were with him also sat down.

“‘What is your problem?’ he asked, so I told him my story. He said to those with him: ‘Who did this?’ but none of them knew who had done it. Then a rebel sprite [*mārid*] came along, bringing the girl with him. The king of the jinn was told: ‘This is one of the rebel sprites from China,’ so he asked him: ‘Whatever prompted you to abduct someone who is under the protection of the Cardinal Pole [*Quṭb*]?’ The sprite replied: ‘I took a fancy to her, and fell in love with her.’ The king gave the order for him to suffer beheading on the spot, and he returned my daughter to me.

“‘Until tonight,’ I said to him, ‘I had never imagined that you would act in compliance with the command of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).’ ‘O yes indeed,’ said he, “the Shaikh keeps an eye on the rebel sprites [*marada*] amongst us, watching out for them from his private apartment. They inhabit the far reaches of the earth, so they flee to their dwellings in awe of him. Whenever Allāh (Exalted is He) appoints a Cardinal Pole [*Quṭb*], He puts him in charge of the jinn, as well as of human beings.’

May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir prescribes an effective cure for epilepsy. ☞

"A man once came to visit our master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and he said to him: 'I am a man from Iṣfahān. I have a wife who frequently throws epileptic fits, and her condition has thwarted all my efforts to find an effective treatment.' The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) responded by telling him: 'This is the work of one of the rebel sprites from the Valley of Sri Lanka [*Sarandīb*], who goes by the name of Khānis [Slinker]. So, whenever your wife throws an epileptic fit, you must say in her ear: "O Khānis, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, the one who lives in Baghdād, is hereby telling you never to return. If you ever do come back, you will come to meet your doom!"'

"The man from Iṣfahān went away, and nothing was seen of him for the next ten years. Then he came back to Baghdād, and people asked him what had happened since his previous visit. He said: 'I acted exactly as the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) instructed me, and my wife's epilepsy has never recurred between then and now.'

"According to the leading exponents of the art of casting spells [*ta'ẓīm*], the city of Baghdād remained free from epilepsy throughout the latter part of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's lifetime. For a period of forty years, not a single case of the disease occurred there, but then, as soon as he died, an epidemic of epilepsy broke out in Baghdād."

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir strips a boastful young flyer of his spiritual state, until Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hītī intercedes on his behalf. ☞

It was Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh Muḥammad ibn Abi 'l-Ghanā'im al-Ḥusainī who said: "One day, Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn al-Hītī entered the private apartment of my master Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), and I was with them at the time. In the entrance passage, we discovered a young man, lying flat on his back. 'O my master,' he said to Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hītī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), 'I beg you to intercede with Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on my behalf!'

“As soon as we had entered his presence, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said: ‘I have given him to you!’ Shaikh ‘Alī went out at once to where the young man lay, taking me along, and conveyed this news to him. He sprang to his feet, stepped out through the open window, and flew off into the air, while I stood there watching him. Then we went back inside to rejoin the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him). ‘What is this all about?’ we asked him, so he explained: ‘He came over here, moving through the air, and he was saying within himself: “In the whole of Baghdād, there is not another man like me!” I therefore stripped him of his spiritual state, and had it not been for Shaikh ‘Alī’s intercession, I would not have restored it to him.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with them all!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir receives an inner warning,  
in the nick of time, that a roof is about to collapse. ☞

Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh Muḥammad ibn Abi ’l-Ghanā’im al-Ḥusainī also said: “One day in Allāh’s sacred month of Muḥarram, in the year [A.H.] 559, approximately three hundred visitors had assembled in the Shaikh’s reception hall, which was located in the arcade by the Baghdād Racetrack [*al-Ḥalba*]. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) hurriedly emerged from inside his private apartment, and cried out to the people: ‘Come quickly here to me! Come quickly here to me! Come quickly here to me!’ They all rushed toward him, until there was no one left outside in the arcade. Barely a moment later, the roof of the arcade collapsed, when all the people were safely out of harm’s way. The Shaikh told them: ‘I was in the private apartment, when I heard a voice say: “The roof is about to collapse, at this very instant,” so I took pity on you all.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ In addition to all his other talents, Shaikh ‘Abd  
al-Qādir proves to be an expert in Arabic grammar. ☞

‘Abdu’llāh al-Jubbā’ī has told us: “I once heard ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Tamīm ash-Shaibānī say: ‘I heard ‘Abd al-Ghanī ibn ‘Abd al-Wāḥid

say: "I heard Abū Muḥammad al-Khashshāb an-Naḥwī [the Grammarian] say:

“““As a young man, I used to take lessons in Arabic grammar [naḥw]. I often heard people describing Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and they never failed to mention the fine quality of his speech, in the discourses he delivered at his regular sessions [majālis]. I felt a keen desire to hear him for myself, but I could never find the time to spare. Then an opportunity presented itself one day, so I was finally able to attend his session, along with all those other people. The Shaikh turned to face the section of the audience in which I happened to be, and he said: “O you there! We have now become your helper, your Sibawaih!”<sup>77</sup> Well, by Allāh, I attached myself closely to him, and derived considerable benefit from him. I acquired a firm and thorough grasp of the principles and rules of Arabic grammar, as well as other sciences [‘ulūm], both intellectual and traditional [‘aqliyya wa naqliyya]. I learned things that I had hardly been aware of until then, and that I had never heard from any other teacher. I received more from him, in less than a year, than I had gathered in the whole of my life up to that point. I simply forgot whatever I had received from anyone other than him.

“““May Allāh be well pleased with him!”””

☞ A beardless youth is notorious for his bad habits,  
but he is moved to repent at Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s  
hand. ☞

‘Abdu’llāh al-Jubbā’i also said: “I heard the following report from Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Mulā‘ib al-Qawwās, who was a notably honest and trustworthy person. He said:

“While paying a visit to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, I found myself in the company of a large group of new arrivals. They had come to consult the Shaikh on a matter of grave concern, with the intention

<sup>77</sup> In explaining the importance of Sibawaih (d. ca. A.H. 177/793 C.E.) to the student of Arabic grammar [naḥw], one can hardly improve on the words of Sir Hamilton Gibb:\*

The Persian Sibawaih...rendered even greater services to Arabic philology. Working on the scattered researches of his predecessors, he combined the results into a systematic and logical exposition of Arabic grammar. His work (it is significant that it has never borne any title but *The Book*), though improved at points by later writers, settled the principles of Arabic grammar once and for all, and still remains the standard authority.

\**Arabic Literature*. Oxford University Press, 1983; p. 53.

of begging him to offer a prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*] on their behalf. Among the many members of the general population who followed in their wake, I noticed a particular beardless youth. I had seen him before, and it was obvious to me that he was on the wrong spiritual track. He was always in a filthy state of ritual impurity [*junub*], and he stank of urine and other foul pollutants, since he never took the trouble to clean himself.

“We had the good fortune to meet Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, so the group explained to him the purpose of their visit, and begged him to offer a prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*] on their behalf. Then the rest of us approached him and kissed his hands, and the group rushed forward in a bunch, all of them equally intent on kissing his hand. The beardless youth then took his turn. He reached for the Shaikh’s hand in order to kiss it, but the Shaikh stuck his hand up his sleeve, while staring at the youth with a penetrating gaze. This caused the young man to collapse in a fainting fit. He soon recovered his senses, and lo and behold, he had grown a beard in a matter of seconds! He promptly stood up before the Shaikh, and repented there and then, so the Shaikh offered him his hand. The Shaikh continued in this vein, until he eventually retired to his private apartment. At that point we all departed.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ With his dying breath, a wise old Shaikh advises his son to follow the guidance of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

It was Abu ‘l-Khair Kurūm, the son of Shaikh al-Qudwa Maṭīr al-Bāzarānī, who said: “When the end of my father’s worldly life was close at hand, I said to him: ‘Leave me with some sound advice. Tell me whose guidance I should follow after you are gone.’ He replied: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s!’ I assumed that his sickness must have overwhelmed him, so I left him alone for a while, then I said to him again: ‘Leave me with some sound advice. Tell me whose guidance I should follow after you are gone.’ Again he replied: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s!’ so I left him alone for a while, then I repeated my request for his advice. This time he said: ‘So long as an age endures, in which

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir can still be found, there is no one else who deserves to be followed!’ That is why, when my father died, I came to Baghdād and attended Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s regular session.

“Among those present at that session, I met several of the most distinguished elders, including Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū, Shaikh Abū Sa‘īd al-Qailawī, and Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hītī. I heard Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir say: ‘I am not like your ordinary preacher. I am at Allāh’s command. My speech is addressed to men in the air.’ He raised his head toward the air above, so I also raised my head into space, and there I saw rows of men of light, mounted on horses of light. They were circling around between my eyes and the sky above, in all their multitude, and they were bowing their heads. Some of them were shedding tears, while some of them were trembling and quaking, and some of them had light in their garments.

“The spectacle caused me to faint, but then I jumped up and started running. I shoved my way through the audience, until I stood on top of the podium, facing the Shaikh. He grabbed me by the ear, and said: ‘O Kurūm, were you not satisfied the first time, when your father bequeathed you his wise advice?’ I could only respond to this by hanging my head in silence, so great was the awe he inspired in me.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”



One hundred clever jurists [*fuqahā'*]  
conspire to interrogate Shaikh 'Abd  
al-Qādir, with a view to putting  
him out of business.

**I**t was Mafraj ibn Nuhbān ibn Barakāt ash-Shaibānī who said: “When the business of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) became widely known, one hundred of the most distinguished and sharp-witted experts [*fuqahā'*] in Islāmic jurisprudence assembled in Baghdād. They decided that each one of them should pose him a single question, different from that posed by any of his colleagues, concerning one of the branches of religious knowledge. By this means, they assumed, they could soon put a stop to the Shaikh's activity.

“The clever jurists all came to attend the Shaikh's session of wise counsel [*majlis wa'z*], on a day on which I was also present. As soon as they had all settled down in their seats, the Shaikh bowed his head in silence, and from his breast there appeared a beam of light, which was visible only to those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) so willed. It shone upon the breasts of the hundred jurists, and as soon as it touched one of them, the target became completely flabbergasted and disoriented. Then they all gave vent to a single loud scream, ripped their gowns to shreds, tossed their turbans off their heads, and climbed the steps up to the lectern, where they laid their heads on the feet of the Shaikh. With a united voice, the people in the audience uttered one deafening yell, and I thought for a moment that Baghdād must be the victim of an earthquake.

“The Shaikh started hugging the jurists to his breast, one of them after another, until he came to the last of the hundred. Then he turned to one of them and said: ‘As for you, the question you had

for me was such-and-such, and the answer to it is such-and-such.' He went on like this, until he had reminded each of them what his question was, and had given him the appropriate answer. When the session finally came to a close, I approached the jurists and asked them: 'How are you feeling now?' They told me: 'No sooner had we taken our seats, than we lost all the knowledge we possessed, as completely as if we had never acquired it in the first place. But then, when he hugged us to his breast, each of us recovered every scrap of the knowledge that had been snatched away. The Shaikh not only reminded us of the questions we had brought here to ask him; he also provided answers that have taught us more than we ever knew before.

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ From prayer rug to royal carpet: Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's prediction proves to be true. ☞

Abu 'l-Ḥijr Ḥāmid al-Ḥarrānī al-Khaṭīb [the Preacher] has told us: "I once entered the presence of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) at his schoolhouse in Baghdād. I sat down beside him on a prayer rug [*sajjāda*] of mine, so he looked at me and said: 'O Ḥāmid, one of these days, you will surely sit on the carpet of kings.' As soon as I had returned to Ḥarrān, Sulṭān Nūr ad-Dīn ash-Shahīd [the Martyr] insisted on keeping me in constant attendance at his court. He treated me as a close confidant, seated me on his royal carpet, and put me in charge of the Department of Religious Endowments [*Awqāf*]. Needless to say, I would often recall those words of the Shaikh.

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ An uneducated Pilgrim takes lessons from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, becomes a qualified preacher, and prospers under two régimes in Egypt. ☞

Shaikh Zain ad-Dīn Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ibrāhīm ibn Najā ibn Ghanā'im al-Anṣārī ad-Dimashqī was a settler in Egypt, where he became a jurist [*faqīh*] of the Ḥanbalī<sup>78</sup> school and a

<sup>78</sup> See note 53 on p. 90 above.

religious preacher [*wā'iz*]. He has told his story in these words:

"I once performed the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*], and my travels brought me to Baghdād, along with a companion of mine. We had never been in that city before, and we knew not one of its inhabitants. We had nothing of value with us but a carving knife, so we sold it for a tiny coin [*ṭassūj*],<sup>79</sup> which we then used to buy some rice. We ate the rice, though it did not taste good to us, and it failed to satisfy our hunger.

"Then we came to the place where Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was holding his regular session. As soon as we entered, he interrupted his speech, and said: 'Some impoverished strangers, far from their homeland, have just arrived from the Ḥijāz [the region of Mecca]! They brought nothing of value with them but a carving knife, which they sold for a mere *ṭassūj*, and then spent the money on some rice. They ate the rice, though it did not taste good to them, and it failed to satisfy their hunger.'

"We marveled at the Shaikh in extreme astonishment, and then, when he had finished delivering his speech, he gave the order for a table-mat to be spread. I asked my companion, in a whisper: 'What do you fancy to eat?' and he replied: 'Barley broth [*kashk*] with meat of the pheasant [*durrāj*].' I said to myself: 'What I fancy is a slice of honeycomb.' At that very moment, the Shaikh told the servant: 'Fetch us some barley broth with pheasant meat, as well as a slice of honeycomb, and be quick about it!' The servant went and brought the two dishes, and the Shaikh said: 'Set them down in front of those two men,' pointing toward the pair of us, so he set the barley broth in front of me, and the honeycomb in front of my companion. The Shaikh said: 'Switch them around, then you will get it right!'

"I simply could not restrain myself from uttering of shriek of surprise. I jumped up, clambered over the necks of the people where they sat, and rushed toward the Shaikh. 'Welcome!' he said to me, 'Welcome to the preacher [*wā'iz*] of the Egyptian regions!' To this I responded by saying: 'O my master, how can that greeting apply to me, when I have hardly mastered the recitation of *al-Fātiḥa* [the Opening Sūra of the Qur'ān]?' 'All I can tell you,' said he, 'is that I have been commanded to address you with those very words.'

<sup>79</sup> The *ṭassūj* is worth a quarter of a *dāniq*, the value of which is equal to one sixth of the silver coin called the *dirham*.

I thereupon became his dedicated student, taking lessons from him in religious knowledge [*ʿilm*]. In the course of a single year, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) endowed me with more learning than anyone could be expected to acquire in twenty years of study.

“I began my preaching career in Baghdād, but then I asked the Shaikh for permission to undertake the journey to Egypt. ‘You must first go to Damascus,’ he told me: ‘There you will find the Oghuz Turks [*al-Ghuzz*] preparing for the invasion of Egypt, which they intend to subject to their rule. You must therefore say to them: ‘You cannot achieve your purpose in Egypt at this time. You had better pull back for now, and return there at a later date, for only then will you gain control of that country.’ When I arrived in Damascus, I found the situation exactly as the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had described it to me. I told the Oghuz what he had told me to convey to them, but they were not inclined to accept my advice.

“I went from Damascus to Egypt, where I found the Caliph [*Khalīfa*] preparing to meet the invaders in battle. I said to him: ‘You have nothing to fear! They will turn back in defeat, and you will march home victorious.’ When the Oghuz did arrive in Egypt, their forces were quickly broken up and scattered. The Caliph chose me for a boon companion, and he made me privy to all his secrets. Then the Oghuz came a second time, and they succeeded in conquering Egypt. The new rulers treated me with enormous respect, because of what I had told them in Damascus. From the two régimes, I collected one hundred thousand *dinārs* [gold coins], plus another fifty thousand, and all on account of a single statement from Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!”

Concerning this Shaikh Zain ad-Dīn, we are told: “When he came to settle in Egypt, he was already well advanced in age. He used to promote the memorization of only one book, a work devoted to Qur’anic exegesis [*tafsīr*]. Due to his special style of preaching, he enjoyed a cordial reception wherever he went, from both the privileged élite and the common people. He was one of those rare scholars who are truly inspired in their understanding and their

ability to communicate [*al-‘ulamā’ al-muḥaddathīn*].<sup>80</sup> He held a regular public session [*majlis*] in Cairo, where the people derived great benefit from him. He died in Egypt in the month of Ramaḍān in the year [A.H.] 599. His birthplace was Damascus, and the year of his birth was [A.H.] 508.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir holds a conversation  
with a snake. ☞

It was Aḥmad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Jīlī who said: “On one occasion, I was with our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir at the Nizāmiyya University [in Baghdād], where he attracted a large gathering of spiritual paupers [*fuqarā’*] and Islāmic jurists [*fuqahā’*]. He gave them a lecture on the subject of the Divine decree and destiny [*al-qada’ wa ’l-qadar*], and, while he was speaking, an enormous snake dropped down from its hole in the roof. All the members of his audience immediately left their seats and scurried away in flight, and the Shaikh was left there all alone. The snake slithered underneath his clothing, wriggled up over the length of his body, emerged through his collar, and then coiled itself around his neck. In spite of this apparent distraction, the Shaikh did not interrupt his lecture for an instant, nor did he make the slightest adjustment to his sitting posture.

“Then the snake slithered down to the ground, reared up on its tail in front of the Shaikh, and emitted a hissing sound. He thereupon addressed the creature, in a form of speech that none of us could understand. Then the serpent went away, so the people came back. When they asked him to explain what it had said to him, and what he had said to it, the Shaikh told them: ‘It said to me: “I have tested the mettle of so many of the saints [*awliyā’*], but I have never seen the like of your peculiar stamina!” I replied by telling it: “When you dropped down upon me, I was speaking about the Divine decree and

<sup>80</sup> As defined by the classical Arabic lexicographers, the term *muḥaddath* (pl. *muḥaddathīn*) means: “a man of true opinion: one who is inspired; into whose mind a thing is put, and who tells it with sagacity; as though he were told a thing, and said it.” According to a traditional report, the Commander of the Believers, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be well pleased with him), was such a *muḥaddath*. (See E.W. Lane, *Arabic English-Lexicon*, art. *Ḥ-D-TH*.)

destiny. And what are you? You are nothing but a little crawling creature [*duwaibba*], set in motion or put to rest by the Divine decree and destiny, so I did not wish to let my actions contradict my words.”

May Allāh be well pleased with him!

☞ Another serpent turns out to be a jinnī, who repents at Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s hand. ☞

We owe this next report to my master, ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, the son of our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He said: “I once heard my father say:

“I was performing the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] one night, in the al-Manṣūrī congregational mosque [*jāmi’*], when I heard the sound of something moving about on the reed mats [*bawārī*]. Then along came a huge viper [*ṣilla*]! With its jaw open wide, the serpent poised its head at the spot where I would set my forehead in the act of prostration [*sujūd*]. As I moved to perform the prostration, my hand brushed the creature aside, and I was able to lower my head to the floor. When I sat up to pronounce the final testimony [*tashahhud*],<sup>81</sup> it slithered onto my thigh, then wriggled up and coiled itself around my neck. I saw no sign of it, however, when I came to perform the final salutation [*taslīma*].<sup>82</sup>

“At some point during the following morning, I went inside a ruined building near the mosque, and there I spied the figure of a man. His eyes were two long slits, so I knew that he must be a jinnī. He turned to me and said: “I am that viper, the serpent you saw last night. I have tested the mettle of so many of the saints [*awliyā’*], by putting them through the experience I inflicted on you, but not one of them handled the situation with anything remotely resembling your steadfast composure. Some of them were utterly distracted,

<sup>81</sup> The testimony [*tashahhud*] is pronounced after two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak‘atain*] and, in a prayer consisting of more than two cycles, in the final stage of the last cycle. (For a detailed account of the movements, postures and utterances that constitute the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], see the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. [Vol. 4, pp. 176–88, of the Al-Baz edition.])

<sup>82</sup> The term *taslīma* [salutation] is applied to the act of turning the head to the right and saying: “*as-salāmu ‘alaikum wa raḥmatu’llāh* [Peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allāh],” then turning the head to the left and repeating these same words.

both outwardly and inwardly, while some were inwardly disturbed, yet managed to preserve their external composure. As for you, I could see that you were not at all disoriented, neither outwardly nor inwardly.” The jinnī then begged me to let him repent at my hand, so I assured him that his repentance was accepted.”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir demonstrates his extraordinary healing talents. ☞

It was al-Khaḍir al-Ḥusainī al-Mawṣilī who said: “I worked as the personal servant of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) for thirteen years, and I know, from my own experience, that he was endowed with extraordinary talents [*khāriqāt*]. For instance, when a sick patient seemed incurable, as far as the medical doctors were concerned, they would bring him along to the Shaikh, who would offer a prayer of supplication on his behalf, and pass his hand over him. The invalid would promptly stand up in front of the Shaikh, already basically cured. He would continue to shed any lingering symptoms of illness, until, in the fastest possible time, he was perfectly fit and well.

“They once brought to the Shaikh a man who was suffering from dropsy [*mustasqī*].<sup>83</sup> He was one of the close relatives of Imām al-Mustanjid. His stomach was horribly overswollen, so the Shaikh passed his hand over him. When he stood up after this treatment, he was as slim and lean in the stomach as if he had never had any problem.

“Abu ‘l-Ma‘ālī Aḥmad al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbalī once came to the Shaikh, and said to him: ‘I am worried about my son Muḥammad. For fifteen months now, the fever [*ḥummā*] has not left him.’ The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) told him: ‘You must go and say in his ear: “O Mother of the Fever-bug [*yā Umm Mildam*], ‘Abd al-Qādir is telling you: ‘Leave my son alone, and ride off to al-Ḥilla!’ When we next saw the boy’s father, and asked him about his son’s health, he replied: ‘The fever left him as soon as I said what the Shaikh told me to say, and it has not come back to my son.’

<sup>83</sup> Dropsy is a disease in which watery fluid collects in cavities or tissues of the body, causing an overswollen state.

Several years later, when we asked him the same question, he told us: 'It has never returned to Baghdād, though rumor has it that the people of al-Ḥilla quite often come down with the fever!'

"Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Azajī once fell sick, so Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir came to visit him. Inside his house, he noticed a cooing pigeon [*rā'ibī*] and a turtledove [*qumrī*]. 'O my master,' the sick man said, 'six months have gone by since this cooing pigeon last laid an egg. As for this turtledove, the last time it sang a note was likewise six months ago.' The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) stood looking at the cooing dove, and he said to it: 'Provide for your owner!' Then he turned to the turtledove and said: 'Glorify your Creator!' The turtledove immediately sang forth, so sweetly that the people of Baghdād soon came in droves to hear its song. The cooing pigeon kept laying eggs and hatching chicks, from then till the day it died. Such was the blessed grace of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

☞ A blind Qur'ān-teacher reminds a boy's father of what Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir had once told him. ☞

"In the year [A.H.] 560, the Shaikh said to me: 'O Khaḍir, you must go back to [your native town of] Mosul, for in your loins you carry the seed of offspring, who will eventually be born there. The first of them will be a male child, whose name is Muḥammad. When he is only seven years old, a blind man called 'Alī will teach him the Qur'ān, here in Baghdād, and he will learn it all by heart in the space of seven months. The grand total of your life span will be ninety-four years, one month and seven days. You will die in the town of Irbil, while you are still sound of hearing and sight, and still in full possession of your energy and strength."

His son, Abū 'Abdi'llāh Muḥammad, has told us: "My father came home to Mosul, and I was born there on the first of the good month of Ṣafar, in the year [A.H.] 561. My father introduced me to a blind man, who would teach me to memorize the Qur'ān really well. When my father asked him about his name and his native town, the blind man said: 'My name is 'Alī, and my native city is Baghdād.' This

reminded him of what the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had once told him. My father died in Irbil, on the ninth of the month of Ṣafar in the year [A.H.] 625, at the age of ninety-four years, one month and seven days. Allāh ensured that all his faculties remained fully at his disposal, until the moment he died.

May Allāh be well pleased with all the good people I have mentioned!"

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir explains the nature of a pupil’s confusion, to the satisfaction of the religious scholars [‘*ulamā*’]. ☞

‘Umar ibn Mas‘ūd al-Bazzāz once said: “These eyes of mine have never seen anyone more thoroughly well versed, in the sciences based on real experience [‘*ulūm al-ḥaqā’iq*’], than my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Someone told him that one of his pupils was saying that he could see Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with the eye of his head. He promptly summoned the pupil concerned, and asked him if he was actually making such a statement. The answer was yes, so the Shaikh scolded him and forbade him to talk like that. He also made him promise that he would not do so again.

“When someone asked him: ‘Is that pupil telling the truth, or is he a liar?’ the Shaikh replied: ‘He is essentially truthful, but he is somewhat confused. That is because he witnesses with his spiritual insight [*baṣīra*], and the rays of his insight connect with the light of his ordinary vision. This leads him to suppose that he has perceived, with his ordinary faculty of sight [*baṣar*], what he actually witnessed with his spiritual insight [*baṣīra*]. His ordinary vision perceives his spiritual insight, and that is all there is to it, though he does not realize that this is the case. As Allāh (Exalted is He) has told us:

He has partitioned the two seas.  
*maraja ’l-baḥraini*

They meet, [but] between them  
*yaltaqiyān: baina-humā*

there is a barrier that they do not overpass.  
*barzakhun lā yabghiyān. (55:19,20)*

“At His behest, and by means of His gracious favors, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) sends forth the radiant lights of His Majesty [*Jalāl*] and His Beauty [*Jamāl*] toward the hearts of His servants. Those lights then assume whatever forms they assume, or take on no shapes at all. Behind all that hangs the veil of His Supreme Grandeur [*Kibriyā'*], which no one can find a way to rend asunder.’

“A group of the Shaikhs and scholars [*ulamā'*] were present at the time, and they were highly delighted to hear what he had to say on this subject. They marveled at the beauty of his eloquence, in explaining the spiritual state of that man.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ A rat and a sparrow pay the price for disturbing  
Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

Shaikh al-Mu‘ammar Jarāda has told us: “One day, I was in the private apartment of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He was sitting there, transcribing a manuscript, when some dust fell down upon him from the ceiling. He shook it off three times, but more of it fell down upon him, and again he shook it off. Then, on this fourth occasion, he raised his head and looked up at the ceiling. He noticed that a rat was scurrying about up there, so he said: ‘May your head fly off!’ The creature dropped down at once, with its carcass falling in one direction, and its head in another. The Shaikh stopped transcribing, and began to weep, so I said: ‘O my master, what can be making you weep?’ He replied: ‘I am sorely afraid that a Muslim might offend my heart, and so be afflicted with the disaster that has just befallen that rat!’”

It was Shaikh ‘Umar ibn Mas‘ūd al-Bazzāz who said: “My master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was performing the minor ritual ablution [*wuḍū'*], one day at the schoolhouse, when a sparrow [*uṣṣūr*] urinated on him. He raised his head as the bird was flying away, and it dropped down dead. As soon as he had finished his ablution, he washed the spot of urine off his garment. He then divested himself of that piece of clothing, and gave it to me. He instructed me to sell it, and to give away the price as a charitable offering. ‘That is to pay for this!’ said he.”

☞ A critic of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir finds that his criticism has assumed an agonizingly painful physical form. ☞

We owe this next report to Abu ‘l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn al-Qāsim ibn ‘Ubdān al-Qurashī al-Baghdādī al-Bazzāz, who said:

“Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to wear clothes of high-quality fabric. His personal servant came to me one day, bringing some gold, and he said: ‘I wish to acquire a gown, for the price of one dīnār per cubit [*dhirā’*] of cloth—not a penny less, and not a penny more.’ So I gave him what he wanted. When I asked him: ‘Who is it for?’ he replied: ‘For my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).’ I said to myself: ‘A true Shaikh does not leave the choice of clothing to a mere representative!’

“Even before this sentence was completely formulated in my mind, I noticed that an ugly corn had developed on my foot. It was so agonizingly painful that I seemed to be staring death in the face. People gathered around me, attempting to remove the corn, but all their efforts were in vain, so I cried: ‘Carry me to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir!’ As soon as they had deposited me in his presence, directly in front of him, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said: ‘O Abu ‘l-Faḍl, this is what comes of criticizing us within your inner being [*bāṭin*]! By the Might and Glory of the only One who deserves to be worshipped [*al-Ma‘būd*], I did not know what I should wear, until heard a voice tell me: “For the sake of My right over you, you must wear a gown that is priced at one dīnār [gold coin] per cubit of cloth!” O Abu ‘l-Faḍl, this is the shroud of death [*kafan al-mawt*], and the shroud of death will envelop this body of mine after a thousand deaths.’

“Then he passed his blessed hand over my foot, and the corn disappeared at once, along with the pain it had caused me. By Allāh, I know neither whence it came, nor whither it went, and I have never seen the like of it on any foot other than my own. As I jumped up and started to run, I heard the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say to his audience: ‘His hostile criticism of us became solidified for him, in the shape of a corn on his foot!’

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s servant experiences a remarkable erotic dream. ☞

Ibn al-Khaḍīr al-Ḥusainī has told us: “Our own Shaikh, Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had a personal servant who lost his ritual purity [due to the emission of semen] seventy times in the course of one night. Each time this happened, he was having a dream, in which he saw himself copulating with a woman, other than the one he had just kissed. Among the women involved in his erotic dream, there were some whom he actually knew, while the rest were strangers to him. When morning came around, he went to the Shaikh, intending to complain to him about his condition.

“Before he had time to mention anything to him, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) told him: ‘You must not feel bad about your state of ritual impurity [*janāba*] during this past night! I saw your name inscribed on the Well-kept Tablet [*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*], and I discovered, from what was recorded upon it, that you would be guilty of unlawful sexual intercourse [*zinā*]<sup>84</sup> no fewer than seventy times: with a woman called so-and-so, and another called so-and-so.... Against each name in the list, there was a note reading: “He knows her,” or “He does not know her.” So I pleaded with Allāh (Exalted is He) on your behalf, until He changed that for you, so that, instead of being a conscious, real-life experience, it would merely be an erotic dream.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”



<sup>84</sup> In the vocabulary of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], the Arabic term *zinā* covers both adultery and fornication. For a precise technical definition, see J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 178.

## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s advice to the supplicant in need of help.

Shaikh ‘Ali al-Khabbāz [the Baker] (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: “I heard Shaikh Abu ‘l-Qāsim ‘Umar say: ‘I heard my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), say:

“““If someone in distress appeals to me for help [*istaghātha bī*], he will be relieved of his distress. If someone in hardship invokes my name, his hardship will be dispelled. If someone beseeches Allāh, through me, to satisfy a need, his need will be satisfied.

“““If someone is experiencing a pressing need, he should perform two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak‘atain*] in the following manner:

- In each cycle [*rak‘a*], after reciting the Opening Sūra [*al-Fātiḥa*], he should recite the Sūra of Sincere Devotion [*Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*]<sup>85</sup> eleven times.

- After the salutation [*salām*] following the testimony [*tashahhud*],<sup>86</sup> he should invoke blessings upon Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace)—eleven times.

- He should then salute me with the greeting of peace, referring to me by my name.

- Finally, he should mention his need, for it will be satisfied, if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills.”””

<sup>85</sup> Sūra 112, which reads:

Say: “He is Allāh, One!  
Allāh, the Everlasting Lord!  
He does not beget, nor was He begotten;  
and there is none  
comparable unto Him.”

*qul Huwa ’llāhu Aḥad:  
Allāhu ’ṣ-Ṣamad:  
lam yalid wa lam yūlad:  
wa lam yakun la-hu  
kufuwan aḥad.*

<sup>86</sup> See note 81 on p. 141 above.

According to one version [*riwāya*] of this report, the Shaikh also said: "The supplicant should take eleven steps toward the East, in the direction of my tomb. He should mention me, and he should mention his need, for it will be satisfied." (According to some, the Shaikh spoke of seven steps, rather than eleven.)

According to yet another version, the Shaikh also advised the supplicant to recite the following poetic verses:

What hardship can overtake me, when You are my treasury?  
How can I be wronged in this world, when You are my support?

Shame on the guardian of the pasture, when he is my helper,  
if the cord that should hobble my camel strays off into the desert!<sup>87</sup>

This advice has been put to the test of experience on numerous occasions, so it is definitely authentic.

May Allāh be well pleased with him!

### ☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's attitude to money and material goods. ☞

As we are informed by al-Jubbā'ī: "Whenever someone brought him some gold, our Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to say: 'Put it under the prayer rug [*sajjāda*]!' He would never touch it with his own hand. As soon as his servant came along, he would tell him: 'Take it away, and give it to the baker and the grocer!' Whenever a robe of honor was delivered to him from the Caliph, he would say: 'Give it to Abu 'l-Faṭḥ aṭ-Ṭaḥḥān [the Miller]!' He would then accept some flour from the latter, as a loan, for the sake of the poor, the needy, and his guests. Of all the robes of honor that came to him from the Caliphs, at the beginning of every month, he never condescended to wear a single one; instead, he invariably gave instructions for them to be passed on to the miller referred to above. May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

It was al-Khaḍīr al-Ḥusainī who said: "I was with my master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), in the congregational mosque [*jāmi'*] one Friday, when a merchant came up to him and said: 'I have some goods with me, and I was intending to give them to the poor and the needy, as a freewill donation, rather

<sup>87</sup> *a-tudriku-nī ǧaimun wa Anta dhakhīr—wa uzlamu fi 'd-dunyā wa Anta naṣīr—wa 'ārun 'alā ḥāmi 'l-ḥimā wa huwa munjīd—idhā ǧalla fi 'l-baidā 'iqālu ba'ir.*

than in payment of the obligatory alms-due [*zakāt*]. As it turns out, however, I cannot find anyone who actually deserves them. Please tell me to whom I should give them!’ (Or he may have said: ‘I shall gladly give them to anyone you wish!’) The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) responded by saying: ‘Just give them away—not only to those who deserve them, but also to those who do not deserve them!’ May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

The same reporter has told us: “The Shaikh once caught sight of a poor beggar, who was utterly brokenhearted, so he said to him: ‘What has put you in this state?’ The man replied: ‘Earlier today, I went along the river bank, and I asked a boatman to ferry me across to the other side. He refused my request, and my heart was broken, on account of my desperate poverty.’ Before the poor beggar had finished speaking, a man came along with a purse, containing thirty *dinārs* [gold coins], which he had brought as a votary offering to the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him). The Shaikh turned to that poor beggar and said: ‘Accept this purse, take it to the boatman, and give it to him. Say to him: “You must never again reject a poor beggar!”’ The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then took off the gown he was wearing, and gave it to the poor beggar, who later sold it for twenty *dinārs*. May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!”

As for Shaikh ‘Umar al-Bazzāz, whenever Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was mentioned in his hearing, he used to recite these two verses of poetry:

All praise be to Allāh! I am next to a hero faithful and true,  
a benefactor [to the good] and [to the wicked] a cause of harm.

Too modest is he to raise his glance, except for a noble cause,  
but to nothing does he shut his eyes, except a cause of shame.

☞ To a wealthy man of good repute, reports of  
Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]  
seem utterly unbelievable, until he undergoes  
a dramatic personal transformation. ☞

It was Abu ‘l-Yusr ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm who said: “‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamad ibn Hammām was one of those reputable figures who are competent to serve as witnesses, and who are endowed with easy circumstances

and abundant wealth. He felt a strong antipathy toward our master, Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), and he vehemently dismissed the reports of his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], while scrupulously avoiding all personal contact with him. At a certain point, however, he became intensely attached to the Shaikh, and this naturally aroused people's curiosity. When I raised the subject with him, after the Shaikh's death, and asked him what had caused that dramatic change in his attitude, he gave me the following explanation:

"The attitude I adopted at first, which you know all about, was due to my general lack of happiness and contentment. Then I happened to be passing by the Shaikh's schoolhouse, one day, just as the start of the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] was being announced. I said to myself: 'Let me seize this opportunity to pray, and to make a clean sweep of the state I am in!' In spite of the fact that my bowels and my bladder were in urgent need of relief, I entered the building and found an empty space, to the side of the pulpit where the Shaikh was seated, and there I performed the prayer. I had not realized that he was leading the congregation in the Friday prayer [*jum'a*], and that people had come in large numbers to attend his regular session [*majlis*]. The density of the crowd inhibited my freedom of movement, and prevented me from getting rid of what was bothering me.

"While my need to get to the toilet was becoming increasingly urgent, the Shaikh climbed up into the pulpit, and I nearly went to pieces. My feeling of repugnance for the Shaikh was doubled at that moment. I was in a state of utter confusion, and I almost emptied my guts inside my clothing. But then I said: 'I risk exposing myself to public disgrace, for the stench I emit will be really awful.' I therefore restrained that impulse, even though it meant staring death in the face.

"Then, while I was desperately trying to think of something to do, the Shaikh took several steps down from the top of the pulpit, and draped his sleeve over his head. I immediately saw myself in a green oasis, set in a desert land, with water flowing. I disposed of what was bothering me, carried out the ablution to make ready for the ritual prayer [*tawaḍḍa' tu li-ṣ-ṣalāt*], and duly performed a prayer of two

cycles [*rak'atain*]. The Shaikh then raised his sleeve from his head, and I found myself under the pulpit, in the same situation as before—except that my problem had disappeared completely! My amazement at this was very great indeed. To my further surprise, I noticed that my limbs were damp, from the moisture of the ablution.

“This whole experience left me feeling bewildered, and my mind was perplexed. I waited till the end of the session, but then, when I got up to leave, I noticed that my handkerchief and the key to my safe were missing. I searched for them at the spot where I had been sitting, as well as in the surrounding area, but all to no avail. Then I went back to my house, where I hired a craftsman to open the safe and fashion new keys. At that particular time, I was planning a journey to the Persian region of ‘Irāq, in connection with some important business of mine. I set out on the day after that on which the Shaikh’s session had been held.

“When I had traveled for three days away from Baghdād, I passed by a place with a very sweet aroma, and there I discovered a green oasis and flowing water. One of my traveling companions said to me: “Why don’t we break our journey here? We can then perform the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] and get something to eat. We shall not find any more water ahead of us.” We therefore made a halt, and I imagined that it must be the place I had seen in my vision. There was no doubt about it, in fact. I promptly performed the ablution to make ready for the ritual prayer [*tawadda’ tu li’ṣ-ṣalāt*], and looked for a suitable place in which to pray. It was then that my eyes caught sight of my handkerchief, and wrapped inside it were my missing keys, the ones I had lost on the day of that session, back there in the schoolhouse!

“I almost went out of my mind, so I concluded my journey and returned to Baghdād. Nothing has been so important to me, from that moment on, as loyal adherence to the Shaikh. I am reluctant to mention any of this, however, for fear that the listener may doubt the veracity of my tale.’ I responded to this by telling ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamad: ‘You must let people know what you experienced because of the Shaikh, for a person like yourself is not open to suspicion, whatever he has to relate.’ He replied: ‘I feel no need to do so. After all, I used to hear such tales myself, from someone whose honesty and reliability

I did not doubt, yet I would not believe what he told me.' I said: 'May Allāh wish you well!' and he said: 'Praise be to Allāh, since I shall not die in the state I was in before!'"

☞ By Allāh's leave, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir restores some chicken bones to life, in the form of a normal, healthy bird. ☞

It was Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Qā'id al-Awānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: "A woman once came to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), bringing her son along with her. She said: 'I have noticed that the heart of this son of mine is intensely attached to you. I have already forsaken any right of my own, as far as he is concerned, first for the sake of Allāh (Exalted is He) and then for your sake. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) accepted him as his pupil, and instructed him to practice the spiritual struggle [*muḥāhada*] and to follow the spiritual path of the forebears [*sulūk ṭarīq as-salaf*].

"One day, when the mother came to visit her son, she was dismayed to find him extremely thin and pale, from the effects of hunger and sleeplessness. She noticed that he was eating bread baked from barley. Then she entered the presence of the Shaikh, and saw in front of him a jar containing the bones of a chicken, from which he had just eaten all the meat. 'O Shaikh,' she said to him, 'how is it that you have chicken to eat, while my son is eating plain barley bread?' The Shaikh responded by placing his hand on those bones, and saying to them: 'Arise, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He), the One who brings bones to life, when they have already started to decay!'

"The chicken immediately arose in perfect shape, and clucked: 'There is no god but Allāh [*lā ilāha illa 'llāh*]. Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh [*Muḥammadur Rasūlu 'llāh*]. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir is the saintly friend [*walī*] of Allāh!' The Shaikh then turned to the mother and said: 'Once that son of yours gets to be like this, he can eat all kinds of tasty food!'

"May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!"

☞ Consensus concerning the special power of dispensation [*taṣrīf*] conferred by Allāh (Exalted is He) on certain saints [*awliyāʾ*]. ☞

It is a matter of general consensus [*ijmāʿ*]—agreed on by the Shaikhs of every category, among the legal experts [*fuqahāʾ*] as well as the spiritual paupers [*fuqarāʾ*], and alluded to in all the relevant literature—that Allāh (Exalted is He) has specifically conferred complete power of dispensation [*taṣrīf*] on certain individuals, from among the saints [*awliyāʾ*] who are leaders [*sāda*] and guides [*qāda*], not only during their lifetime, but also in their graves after their death, so that they are effectively alive until the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*]. The saints concerned are the following:

- Our master, our patron, and our guide to Allāh (Exalted is He), the consummate Imām Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlī.

- The senior Shaikh, the proven antidote [*ad-diryāq al-mujarrab*], Maʿrūf ibn Maḥfūz ibn Firūz ibn al-Marzubān al-Karkhī.<sup>88</sup>

- The Shaikh who has reached the goal of his journey [*al-wāṣil ar-riḥla*], ʿUqail al-Manbijī.

- The perfect Shaikh Ḥayāt ibn Qais al-Ḥarrānī.

May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

Likewise four in number, according to that same consensus, are those righteous spiritual leaders who can heal the blind-from-birth [*akmah*] and the leper [*abraṣ*], and who can restore the dead to life, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He). They are:

- The Cardinal Pole [*Qutb*], the Spiritual Helper [*Ḡhawth*], Shaikh Muḥyi ʿd-Dīn Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, whose name occurs in the preceding list.

- The senior Shaikh, my master Aḥmad ar-Rifāʿī.

- The ascetic follower of the spiritual path [*as-sālik an-nāsik*], Shaikh ʿAlī ibn al-Hitī.

- The righteous and exemplary guide, Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū.

May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

<sup>88</sup> See note 39 on p. 71 above.

Likewise four in number, according to that same consensus, are the leaders of spiritual progress and development [*sādāt as-sulūk wa 't-tawālī*], namely:

- The perfect Shaikh from Mosul [*al-Mawṣilī*], Maslama ibn Ni'mat as-Sarūjī.

- The insightful educator [*al-'ārif al-murabbī*], Shaikh Ḥammād ibn Muslim ad-Dabbās.

- The competent authority [*ḥujja*], the connector of the small with the great, the crown of those who know by direct experience [*tāj al-'ārifīn*], Shaikh Abu 'l-Wafā Muḥammad Kākīs.

- The worshipful servant [*'ābid*], the pious ascetic [*zāhid*], the warrior devoted to the spiritual struggle [*mujāhid*], 'Adī ibn Musāfir.

May Allāh enable us to derive benefit from them, through their gracious blessings, in this world and the Hereafter.

Concerning the Shaikhs referred to here in summary fashion, fuller information will be supplied in due course, as promised earlier in this work, if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills.<sup>89</sup>

### ☞ The Devil tells the truth for once. ☞

Shaikh 'Alī al-Khabbāz [the Baker] has told us: "I once heard our own Shaikh, Shaikh Abū Ḥifẓ al-Kīmānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say: 'One night, when I was in my private retreat, the wall suddenly cracked open, and in through gap came an ugly-looking figure. 'Who are you?' I asked the intruder, and he said: 'I am Iblīs,<sup>90</sup> and I have come here to give you some wise advice.' When I asked him: 'And what is your wise advice?' he said: 'I shall teach you the proper way to sit, in order to practice vigilant awareness [*murāqaba*].'<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> See pp. 339–540 below.

<sup>90</sup> See note 17 on p. 40 above.

<sup>91</sup> In the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has devoted a subsection to the subject of vigilant awareness [*murāqaba*], in which he explains why it is essential to the sacred struggle [*mujāhada*]. (See Vol. 5, pp. 95–96, of the Al-Baz edition.)

He then sat in a squatting position [*qurfuṣā'*],<sup>92</sup> with his head bowed down toward the ground.

“Early the next morning, I went to see my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), intending to tell him about this uncanny experience. As soon as I had greeted him, and before I had mentioned anything to him, the Shaikh grasped me by the hand and said to me: ‘O ‘Umar, he actually told you the truth, even though he is a confirmed liar. You must never again accept anything from him.’”

As we are told by the abovementioned Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī: “This was Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s favorite sitting posture for approximately forty years.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ A Shāfi‘ī scholar prepares a secret scenario, which Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir duly enacts in every detail. ☞

We owe this next report to Shaikh Badī‘ ad-Dīn Khalaf ibn ‘Ayyāsh ash-Shāri‘ī ash-Shāfi‘ī [the expert in Islāmic Law, according to the Shāfi‘ī school].<sup>93</sup> He said:

“The principal Shāfi‘ī scholar of his day and age, Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthman as-Sa‘dī, once sent me to Baghdād, with the task of obtaining for him a copy of the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal<sup>94</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him). As soon as I arrived in Baghdād, I found the people there speaking, in the most complimentary

<sup>92</sup> The classical Arabic lexicographers give the following definitions of the sitting posture termed *qurfuṣā'*:

- Sitting on the buttocks, holding the thighs close to the belly, and putting the arms around the shanks.
- Sitting on the knees, bending down, holding the belly close to the thighs, and putting the hands under the armpits.
- Sitting on the legs, putting the knees together, and folding the arms over the breast. (See: E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, art. Q–R–F–Ṣ.)

<sup>93</sup> The Shāfi‘ī school, one of the four orthodox schools [*madhāhib*] of Islāmic jurisprudence, was founded by Imām Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad ibn Idrīs ash-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), who died in the year A.H. 204/820 C.E. Imām al-Ghazālī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was one of the most notable professors of the Shāfi‘ī school.

<sup>94</sup> See note 53 on p. 90 above.

terms, about Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). I said to myself: 'If this man really does resemble what is said about him, he will surely disclose to me whatever I picture inside my own mind.'

"I then proceeded to compose a highly improbable scenario, saying to myself: 'I propose the following sequence of events: When I enter the presence of the Shaikh, and salute him with the greeting of peace, he will not return my greeting, and he will turn his face away from me. He will say to his personal servant: "Fetch me a piece of dried date, the size of this man's skull, along with a bunch of herbs for the price of two dāniqs<sup>95</sup>—not a tiny bit more, and not a tiny bit less!" As soon as the servant has brought him those items, he will give me a white cotton skullcap [tāqiyya] to wear, before I have asked him, and he will salute me in turn with the greeting of peace [salām].'

"I got up at once, and made my way over to the schoolhouse, where I came upon the Shaikh as he was sitting in the prayer-niche [miḥrāb]. He looked at me with a special kind of glance, from which I understood that he knew everything there was inside my being. I saluted him with the greeting of peace, but he did not return my greeting. He turned his face away from me, and said to his personal servant: 'Fetch me a piece of dried date, the size of this man's skull, along with a bunch of herbs for the price of two dāniqs—not a tiny bit more of either item, and not a tiny bit less of either!'

"Well, by Allāh, the Shaikh had thus far enacted the scene as I had envisioned it in secret, and he had not omitted any detail from it. As soon the servant came back to him, he picked up the skullcap [tāqiyya]—it was obviously my skullcap—and placed inside it a piece of dried date, for which it might have been a mold. He then presented me with the bunch of herbs, gave me the skullcap to wear, and returned my greeting of peace. Then he said: 'O Khalaf, you wished for this, so eat it all up!' I became attached to him from that time on, acquired religious knowledge from him, and attended his classes on the Prophetic Tradition [Ḥadīth]."

This Shaikh Badī 'ad-Dīn was one of the true experts in religious knowledge [ilm], one of those righteous scholars who are inspired in their understanding and their ability to communicate [muḥaddathīn].<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> See note 79 on p. 138 above.

<sup>96</sup> See note 80 on p. 140 above.

He made his home in Egypt, and it was he who conferred the tattered robe [*khirqā*] of the Qādiriyya on the people of that country.

May Allāh be well pleased with both Shaikhs!

☞ To the astonishment of a prominent scholar, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir discusses forty different interpretations of a single Qur’ānic verse [*āya*]. ☞

It was al-Ḥāfiẓ Abu ’l-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad al-Bandanijī who said: “Together with Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn ibn al-Jawzī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), I once attended the regular session held by our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him). The Qur’ān-reciter [*qārī*] recited a Qur’ānic verse [*āya*], and the Shaikh discussed one possible interpretation [*tafsīr*] of it. I turned to Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn and said: ‘Are you familiar with this particular interpretation?’ His answer was yes. Then Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir mentioned another way of understanding the same verse, so I asked Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn: ‘Are you also familiar with this interpretation?’ Again his answer was yes. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir mentioned eleven different interpretations, and in each instance, when I asked Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn: ‘Are you also familiar with this interpretation?’ his answer was in the affirmative.

“Then Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir referred to yet another interpretation, so I asked Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn: ‘Are you also familiar with this one?’ This time his answer was: ‘No, I am not acquainted with this one.’ He gave me a equally negative response to each of my subsequent questions, as Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir went on to mention yet another interpretation, followed by yet another, until he reached a grand total of forty different ways of understanding that same Qur’ānic verse. Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn was utterly astonished, as he marveled at the vast scope of the knowledge demonstrated by our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

“Finally, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir said: ‘Let us have done with the talk [*qāl*], and let us now return to the spiritual state [*ḥāl*]: There is no god but Allāh! [*lā ilāha illa ’llāh*]. Muḥammad is the

Messenger of Allāh! [*Muḥammadur Rasūlu 'llāh*].’ All the people in the audience were shaken with an intense vibration, and Shaikh Jamāl ad-Dīn ibn al-Jawzī was moved to rip his clothes to shreds.”

☞ Concerning the scope of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s academic teaching. ☞

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusainī al-Mawṣilī has told us: “I once heard my father say: ‘Our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, used to lecture on thirteen branches of religious knowledge [*‘ilm*]. In his school-house, he would give a lesson devoted to the established legal doctrine of a particular school [*madhhab*], and a lesson devoted to the conflict of scholarly opinion [*khilāf*]. He held classes at both ends of the day, on a wide range of subjects, including Qur’ānic interpretation [*tafsīr*], the sciences concerned with the Prophetic Tradition [*‘ulūm al-Ḥadīth*], established legal doctrine [*madhhab*] and conflicting scholarly opinion [*khilāf*], the basic sources and principles [*uṣūl*],<sup>97</sup> and the rules of Arabic grammar [*naḥw*]. In the period following the midday prayer [*ẓuhr*], he provided instruction in the recitation of the Glorious Qur’ān, according to the various traditional modes of recitation [*qirā’āt*].”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir gives formal legal opinions [*fatāwā*] according to the doctrine of the Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanbali schools of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. ☞

‘Umar al-Bazzāz has told us: “Requests for formal legal opinions [*fatāwā*] used to reach our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, from all the districts of ‘Irāq, as well as from other regions. We never saw him defer his response to a legal question [*fatwā*] till the following day, in order to study it or think about it. He preferred to commit his decision on the matter to writing, directly after reading the issue presented. He used to base his opinions on the legal doctrine

<sup>97</sup> In the case of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], the basic sources [*uṣūl*] are four, namely: (1) the Qur’ān; (2) the Sunna [the exemplary practice of Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace)]; (3) analogical deduction [*qiyās*]; (4) consensus [*ijmā‘*].

[*madhhab*] of the two Imāms, ash-Shāfi‘ī<sup>98</sup> and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal<sup>99</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with them both). His legal opinions [*fatāwā*] were reviewed by the scholars of ‘Irāq, who were amazed at the speed of his response to the problems raised. For those who studied under him, in any special field of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*], he would always be the one from whom to seek advice. He reigned supreme over all his colleagues. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

It was Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq [the son of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir] who said: “A request for a formal legal opinion [*fatwā*] arrived in Baghdād, from lands of the Persians. It had already been presented to the scholars [*‘ulamā*] of the two ‘Irāqs [the Arab and Persian regions], but the issue involved had baffled those experts, and not one of them could provide a suitable response. The application was formulated in these terms:

“What do the leading scholars have to say about the case of a man who swears a solemn oath, three times, declaring marital repudiation [*ṭalāq*] to be the consequence of his failure to fulfill that oath, by which he vows that he will most certainly devote himself to the worshipful service [*‘ibāda*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), with a devotion that will distinguish him uniquely from all other people, throughout the period of his commitment thereto—but who does not perform any acts of worshipful service [*‘ibādāt*] whatsoever? Give us your formal legal opinion, and you will be duly recompensed. May Allāh reward you with the Garden of Paradise!”

“This request was brought to my father [Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir], and he immediately wrote down the following response: ‘That man must go to Mecca, where the circuit [*maṭāf*] [around the Ka‘ba] should be left clear for him alone. He must circumambulate [the Ka‘ba] for one whole week. His oath will thereby be discharged.’ The man applying for a legal opinion [*mustaftī*] did not linger to spend that night in Baghdād. He set out immediately, heading straight toward Mecca.

“May Allāh (Exalted is He) ennoble that city, and may he be well pleased with the Shaikh!”

<sup>98</sup> See note 93 on p. 156 above.

<sup>99</sup> See note 53 on p. 90 above.

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir explains the significance of three headscarves, worn on top of a turban. ☞

We owe this next report to Muḥammad ibn Abi ‘l-‘Abbās al-Khaḍir al-Ḥusainī al-Mawṣilī, who said: “I once heard my father say:

“I was sleeping in Baghdād, at the schoolhouse of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), one night in the year [A.H.] 551. In my dream, I saw an enormously spacious location, teeming with all the Shaikhs of land and sea, and our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, was there in the very midst of them. Among those Shaikhs, I noticed that one had a plain and simple turban on his head, while another wore a headscarf over his turban, and yet another wore two headscarves over his turban. As for our master, Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir, he wore three headscarves over his turban. I remained in a state of sleep, thinking about those headscarves and wondering what they might be. Then I woke up, and there was the Shaikh himself, standing next to my head. He said: ‘The headscarf in honor of the science of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*], the headscarf in honor of the science of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*], and the headscarf of honor itself.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ The special status of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, in relation to the other saints [*awliyā’*] of his day and age. ☞

It was Shaikh Abu ‘l-Barakāt Ṣakhr ibn Ṣakhr ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: “In the time of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, every other saint of Allāh was required to make a solemn pledge for his sake, vowing not to operate in his particular manner, whether outwardly or inwardly, except with his permission. He was someone empowered to speak in the immaculate state of sanctity [*quds*], by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He), and he was one of those endowed with freedom of disposal [*taṣṛīf*] in all the realms of being, after his death as well as prior to his death.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir visits the tombs of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Shaikh Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī, and engages in conversation with them. ☞

Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī has told us: “Together with my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū, I once went to visit the tomb of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him). Before my very eyes, he emerged from his tomb, hugged Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir to his breast, conferred upon him a robe of honor, and said: ‘O Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, there is a very great need for your contribution to the science of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*], the science of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*], and the science of the spiritual state [*ḥāl*].’ May Allāh be well pleased with them all!”

Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also said: “On another occasion, together with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), I went to visit the tomb of Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī<sup>100</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him). Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir said to him: ‘Peace be upon you, O Shaikh Ma‘rūf! We have overtaken you by two degrees!’ His reply came from the tomb: ‘And upon you be peace, O leader of the people of your day and age!’

“May Allāh be well pleased with them all!”

☞ The jinn all flock to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s regular session [*majlis*]. ☞

It was Abū Naẓar ibn ‘Umar al-Baghdādī al-Mathnī, commonly known as aṣ-Ṣaḥrāwī, who said: “I heard my father say: ‘I once summoned the jinn, by means of spells and incantations [*‘azā’im*], but I was kept waiting longer than usual for their response. Then, when they finally came to me, they said: ‘If you ever try to summon us again, you must not do so while Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is speaking to the people!’ When I asked them why not, they said: ‘We all flock to him,’ so I exclaimed: ‘Well I never! Do you mean to tell me that you, the jinn, do that too?’ They said: ‘Our crowd at his session is even more densely packed than the crowd of human beings. Many groups from amongst us have embraced Islām and repented at his hands.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

<sup>100</sup> See note 39 on p. 71 above.

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir appears to someone in a dream,  
in a scene taking place on the Day of Resurrection. ☞

Our next report comes from a group of several Shaikhs: namely, Abu 'l-Faraj ad-Duwairi, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Atharī, Yaḥyā aṣ-Ṣarṣarī, and 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ash-Shahrabānī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon them all). They have told us:

"One day in the year [A.H.] 610, the four of us were together in the company of Shaikh 'Alī ibn Idrīs al-Ya'qūbī, when along came Shaikh 'Umar al-Maridī, commonly known as Tarīda ['Tasty Breadcrumb'].<sup>101</sup> 'Tell them about that dream of yours!' said Shaikh 'Alī ibn Idrīs to the new arrival, who responded by telling us:

"While I was asleep, I saw that the Resurrection [*Qiyāma*] had begun to unfold, and the Prophets and their communities [*umam*] were approaching the Place of Standing [*Mawqif*]. Some of the Prophets had two men following each of them, while others had only a single follower each. Then along came Allāh's Messenger [Muḥammad] (Allāh bless him and give him peace), with his Community [*Umma*] streaming in front of him, like a vast torrential flood.<sup>102</sup> The Shaikhs were among them, and together with every Shaikh were his companions, forming groups that varied in number, in radiance, and in splendor.

"One man stood out in the midst of all the Shaikhs, and he was accompanied by very many people, who clearly excelled all the rest. When I asked about him, I was told: "That is Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, and those are his companions," so I approached him and said: "O my master, among all the Shaikhs, I have not seen anyone more magnificent than you, and among all their followers, I have seen none finer than your followers!" The Shaikh thereupon recited these poetic verses:

Should any of us be a tribal chief, he will exalt his tribe,  
and should it be oppressed, he will protect it from oppression.

Should it ever be put to the test, he will serve as its wise elder,  
and should it ever triumph, he will serve as its brave young hero.

If our tents are ever smitten by the edges of the sword,  
he will serve in their stead, as a haven safe for our visitors.

<sup>101</sup> The word *tarīda* is a colloquial form of the classical Arabic *tharīda*, which means: "a piece of bread, crumbled with the fingers, and then moistened with broth, generally having some flesh-meat with it." One particularly delicious variety is said to be prepared with marrow and the yolks of eggs. (See: E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, art. TH-R-D.)

<sup>102</sup> *ka-'s-sail wa ka-'l-lail* (Literally, "like the flood and like the night.")

“At that point I woke up, and discovered that I had committed these verses to memory.”

“Shaikh Muḥammad al-Khayyāt [the Tailor] al-Wā‘iz [the Preacher] was also present on that occasion, so Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs said to him: ‘O Muḥammad, recite some more poetry for us, in a similar vein to this, as you remember hearing it on the tongue of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.’ He responded by treating us to the following recital:

Welcome to you, my morning, for I am the caravan guide!  
I shall lead the travelers straight to a resting place of comfort.

I shall also keep them safe—all in fulfillment of His command—  
and bring them to rest in the Holy Presence of my Lord.

I know where all the finest foods are stored along the way,  
and where to find the source of water that is sweet to drink.

The people of purity [*ṣafā*] are quick to follow in my wake,  
each with a sense of purpose sharper than the caustic tongue.

“You have done very well indeed,” said Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs, “and you have uttered nothing but the truth!”

### ☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir reads the mind of the Grand Vizier’s grandson. ☞

It was al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn an-Najjār who said: “Shaikh Abu ‘l-Faṭḥ Aḥmad once told me: ‘I asked my grandfather, the Grand Vizier, Abu ‘l-Muẓaffar Yaḥyā ibn Hubaira, to grant me permission to attend the regular session [*majlis*] held by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. He gave me his permission, and he also gave me a sum of money, in the form of gold coins, which he instructed me to hand to the Shaikh. He also instructed me to convey to him the greeting of peace [*salām*]. I duly attended the session, and when it was over, and the Shaikh had stepped down from the pulpit, I saluted him with the greeting of peace. As for the gold, I felt too embarrassed to hand it to him in the midst of that crowded gathering. I said to myself: ‘I shall wait till the Shaikh retires to his private apartment, then I shall enter his presence and place the gold at his disposal.’

“The Shaikh forestalled me, however, as if he already knew what was on my mind. ‘Just give me what you have there with you,’ he said, ‘and take no notice of the people. You must also convey my greeting to the Grand Vizier.’ I then took my leave, feeling utterly bewildered.”

According to another version of this account, the Shaikh said to him: "Keep whatever gold you have with you, and take no notice of the people. There is no need for you to think of paying me a private visit. Convey the greeting of peace to your grandfather, the Grand Vizier, and tell him: 'Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir has no need of what you sent, for he can do perfectly well without it. Return it to those [unfairly taxed and unjustly exploited people] who are truly entitled to it!'" The grandson said: "I then took my leave, feeling utterly bewildered.

"May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!"

☞ A brief but comprehensive account of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's special merits, expressed with great intensity of feeling. ☞

We owe this next report to Shaikh Najm ad-Dīn Abu 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Abi 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Baṭā'ihī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), for it was he who said: "I once heard my brother, Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-A'zab, say:

"Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) is our master, and he is the Shaikh of those who pursue Reality [*muḥaqqiqīn*], the Imām of the champions of Truth [*ṣiddīqīn*], the living proof of those who know by direct experience [*'arīfīn*], and the exemplary guide of those who follow the path that leads to the Lord of All the Worlds [*Rabb al-'ālamīn*].

"May Allāh be well pleased with them all, and may Allāh be well pleased with us, for their sake! Amīn."

☞ More of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's poetic utterances. ☞

Abu 'l-Barakāt ash-Shahrazūrī has told us: "Once, while he was speaking from the lectern in his place by the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Azaj*], I heard Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī pronounce this poetic verse:

It surely is a pity that my nights are spent to no avail,  
for they are counted in the reckoning of my span of life! <sup>103</sup>

<sup>103</sup> *a-lāisa minā 'l-khusrāni anna layāliyā—tamurru bi-lā naf'in fa-tuḥsabu min 'umrī.*

Ibn al-Khaḍir said: “Our master, Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had been absent from his companions for some time, on one of his spiritual training exercises [*riyāḍāt*]. As soon as he made himself accessible again, they approached him and asked him about his state of being with Allāh (Exalted is He). The Shaikh couched his response in these poetic verses:

Since we left you that year, we have been  
on a sea whose shore is a haven of comfort.

The sunlight on that haven rose and set  
within us, and from us began its morning ascent.

We handled its jewels and refined them  
till they were purified, so gems we came to be.

Now tell us, what is the sea, the haven and the sun,  
and what is the gem of the ocean that we crossed?

Say, in the tongue of the Unseen, not with a nod:  
did it stay there or leave us, or did we depart by night?

While we were there, our hearts inclined anew  
to the course of time, though we were already gray.

Since we left by night, it was neither hard  
for our mounts to carry us, nor hard for us to ride.

We had left the brimming seas behind us,  
so how could people know where we were bound?

Therein lies a tale of wonders indescribable,  
a tale that we can neither tell nor promulgate.

We witnessed a beauty never manifest to others;  
our spirits beheld it, and we did not look away.

“In this same vein, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake) once said:

By the breeze my inner being was wafted to the gardens,  
and most astute did I become, before delusion could harm me.

Of every subtle meaning I now contemplate a goblet,  
and every songstress in the universe delights me with her song.

I have a boon companion, who looks exactly like myself;  
I tell him something, if I wish, or, if he wishes, he tells me.

If I decide to keep a secret, he knows what I am thinking,  
and whatever he may wish, he lets me understand it clearly.

Were I to drink the seven seas, my bones would still be thirsty,  
if I did not have the sight of him to fill me with contentment.

“Again in this same vein, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also said:

O House of Names! From you names came to light,  
and human beings became poor beggars from then on.<sup>104</sup>

Since names came to light, the Ben-tree no longer yields  
all its finest fruit, nor is the splendid garden so luxuriant.

☞ More of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s wise sayings,  
recorded by historians. ☞

In his *Ta’rīkh* [History], al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn an-Najjār tells the reader: “‘Abdu’llāh al-Jubbā’ī once wrote me a letter, and I have copied it here from his original script. He said: ‘Our own Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, used to say: “This world is full of busy preoccupations [*ashghāl*], and the Hereafter is full of terrifying uncertainties [*ahwāl*]. The servant [of the Lord] is caught between busy preoccupations and terrifying uncertainties, until his final destination is established, whether it is to be the Garden of Paradise or the Fire of Hell.”’

“In one of his public discourses [*majālis*], the Shaikh said: ‘What first arises above the horizon, within the heart of the true believer [*mu’min*], is the star of wisdom [*najm al-ḥikma*], then the moon of intellectual knowledge [*qamar al-‘ilm*], and then the sun of knowledge acquired by direct experience [*shams al-ma’rifā*]. By the light of the star of wisdom, he can look at this world. By the light of the moon of intellectual knowledge, he can look at the Other World. By the light of the sun of knowledge acquired by direct experience, he can look at the Master [*Mawlā*].’

“In another of his speeches, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said: ‘The saints [*awliyā’*] are the brides [*‘arā’is*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), so no one is allowed to see them unveiled, apart from someone too closely related for marriage [*dhū mahram*].’ May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

That highly erudite scholar, Imām Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-‘Imād al-Aqfahsī ash-Shāfi‘ī, is the author of a book entitled:

<sup>104</sup> This must surely be addressed to Adam (peace be upon him), who taught all the names of things to the angels, and was subsequently evicted from the Garden of Paradise.

“The String of Pearls, concerning the Migration of the Best of Humankind [*Naẓm ad-Durar fī Hijra Khair al-Bashar*].” In the subsection headed: “How the jinn embraced Islām, when they heard the Qur’ān from him [the Prophet] (Allāh bless him and give him peace),” he includes the following statement:

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī once came across a solitary survivor from their number.” (That is to say, from the jinn who embraced Islām, when they heard the Prophet—Allāh bless him and give him peace—reciting the Qur’ān.)

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir answers a question concerning the prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*]. ☞

“When someone asked Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) about the prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*], he explained as follows:

“There are three distinct categories to the prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*], namely: (1) explicit statement [*taṣrīḥ*], (2) implication [*ta‘rīd*],<sup>105</sup> and (3) symbolic indication [*ishāra*].

- In the case of explicit statement [*taṣrīḥ*], the supplication is clearly enunciated in spoken words.

- In the case of implication [*ta‘rīd*], the supplication is alluded to indirectly within another supplication, or hidden within some other kind of statement.

- In the case of symbolic indication [*ishāra*], the supplication is concealed within nonverbal actions.

“As an example of implication [*ta‘rīd*], we may quote the saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

Do not entrust us with the management of our own selves, not even for the twinkling of an eye!

“As an example of symbolic indication [*ishāra*], we may quote the saying of Abraham [*Ibrāhīm*] (peace be upon him):

“My Lord, show me how You will give life to the dead.”  
*Rabbi ari-nū kaifa tuḥyi ‘l-mawtā. (2:260)*

<sup>105</sup> According to context, *ta‘rīd* may sometimes signify: hinting; allusion; innuendo.

—indicating a visionary experience.<sup>106</sup>

“As an example of explicit statement [*taṣrīḥ*], we may quote the saying of Moses [*Mūsā*] (peace be upon him):

“My Lord, show me, so that I may look at You!”  
*Rabbi ari-nī anẓur ilai-k. (7:143)’”*



<sup>106</sup> In this example, the symbolic indication [*ishāra*] would seem to relate to the nature of the response, rather than to the manner in which the supplication [*du‘ā’*] is expressed.

## Some of the prayers of supplication [*ad'īya*] frequently offered by Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.

Shaikh 'Abd ar-Razzāq [Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's son] (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has told us: "Here is one of the prayers of supplication [*ad'īya*] that my father used to offer, during his sessions of exhortation:

O Allāh, we take refuge  
with Your connection  
from Your exclusion,  
*Allāhumma innā na'ūdhu*  
*bi-waṣli-ka*  
*min ṣaddi-k.*

and with Your nearness  
from Your dismissal,  
*wa bi-qurbi-ka*  
*min ṭardi-k.*

and with Your acceptance  
from Your rejection.  
*wa bi-qabūli-ka*  
*min raddi-k.*

Include us among those whose obedience  
and love are devoted to You,  
*wa 'j'al-nā min ahli ṭā'ati-ka*  
*wa waddi-k.*

and make us worthy  
of giving thanks  
and praise to You,  
*wa ahhil-nā*  
*li-shukri-ka*  
*wa ḥamdi-k.*

O Most Merciful of the merciful.  
*yā Arḥama 'r-rāḥimīn.*

The following prayers of supplication [*ad'iya*] were also offered by Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

O Allāh, we beg of You a faith  
that is fit for Your review,  
*Allāhumma innā nas'alu-ka imānan*  
*yaşluhu li'l-'arḍi 'alai-k.*

and a certitude with which we may stand  
before You at the Resurrection,  
*wa iqānan naqifu bi-hi*  
*fi 'l-Qiyāmati baina yadai-k.*

and an immunity by which You will save us  
from the entanglements of sins,  
*wa 'işmatan tunqidhu-nā bi-hā*  
*min waraṭāti 'dh-dhunūb.*

and a mercy by which You will purify us  
from the defilement of faults,  
*wa raḥmatan tuṭahhiru-nā bi-hā*  
*min danasi 'l-'uyūb.*

and a knowledge by which we may comprehend  
Your commandments and Your prohibitions,  
*wa 'ilman naḥqahu bi-hi*  
*awāmira-ka wa nawāhī-k.*

and an understanding by which we may know  
how to converse with You in private.  
*wa fahman na'lamu bi-hi*  
*kaifa nunāji-k.*

Include us, in this world and the Hereafter,  
among those worthy of Your friendship,  
*wa 'j'al-nā fi 'd-dunyā wa 'l-ākhirati*  
*min ahli walāyati-k.*

and fill our hearts  
with the light of Your intimate acquaintance,  
*wa 'mla' qulūba-nā*  
*bi-nūri ma'rifati-k.*

and anoint the eyes of our minds  
with the ointment of your guidance,  
*wa 'kḥul 'uyūna 'uqūli-nā*  
*bi-ithmid hidāyati-k.*

and guard the feet of our thoughts  
from the perils  
of the footprints of dubious undertakings,  
*wa 'ḥrus aqdāma afkāri-nā*  
*min mazāliqi*  
*mawāṭi'i 'sh-shubuhāt.*

and keep the birds of our base instincts  
 from falling into in the nets  
 of lustful transgressions,  
*wa 'mna' tuyūra nufūsi-nā*  
*mīna 'l-wuqū' i fī shibāki*  
*mūbiqāti 'sh-shahawāt.*

and assist us to perform the ritual prayers,  
 in a state that is free from carnal desires,  
*wa a' in-nā fī iqāmati 'ṣ-ṣalawāti*  
*'alā tarki 'sh-shahawāt.*

and erase the lines of our bad deeds  
 from the records of our actions,  
 with the hands of good deeds.  
*wa 'mhu sutūri sayyi' āti-nā*  
*mīn jarā' idi a' māli-nā*  
*bi-aidi 'l-ḥasanāt.*

May You be there for us,  
 when we are otherwise deprived of hope,  
*kun la-nā*

*ḥaithu yanqaṭi' u 'r-rajā' u min-nā*  
 when even those of generous nature  
 turn their faces from us,  
*idhā a' raḍa ahlu 'l-jūdi*  
*bi-wujūhi-him 'an-nā*

when the pledges of our deeds arrive  
 in the darkness of the graves,  
 until the Day of Witnessing.  
*ḥīnā taḥṣulu fī zulmi 'l-luḥūdi*  
*rahā' inu af' āli-nā*  
*ilā yawmi 'sh-shuhūd.*

Treat Your servant  
 in the manner to which he is accustomed,  
 and keep him safe from mistakes,  
*wa ajri 'abda-ka*  
*'alā mā alifa*  
*wa 'ṣim-hu mina 'z-zilal.*

and enable him, and all those present here,  
 to speak and act correctly,  
*wa waffiq-hu wa 'l-ḥādirīna*  
*li-ṣalāhi 'l-qawli wa 'l-'amal.*

and cause his tongue to utter words  
 of value to the listener,  
*wa ajri 'alā lisāni-hi*  
*mā yantaḥi' u bi-hi 's-sāmi'.*

words that will cause his tears to flow,  
*wa tudharrifu la-hu 'l-madāmi'.*

and that will soothe the heart of the humble.  
*wa yulayyinu qalba 'l-khāshi'.*

Forgive him, and those present here,  
*wa 'ghfir la-hu wa li'l-hādirīn.*

and all the Muslims everywhere.  
*wa li-jamī'i 'l-muslimīn.*

When he was ready to bring his session to a close, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to say:

May Allāh include us, and all of you,  
among those who are attentive to His service,  
*ja'ala-na 'llāhu wa iyyā-kum*  
*mim-man tanabbaha li-khidmati-h.*

and who practice detachment from this world,  
*wa tanazzaha 'ani 'd-dunyā.*

and who remember the Day of their Final Gathering,  
*wa tadhakkara yawma ḥashri-h.*

and who follow in the footsteps of righteous.  
*wa 'qtafā āthāra 'ṣ-ṣāliḥīn.*

For He is the Guardian of all that,  
and the One who is Capable of it all.  
*inna-hu Waliyyu dhālika*  
*wa 'l-Qādiru 'alai-h.*

O Lord of All the Worlds!  
*yā Rabba 'l-'ālamīn.*

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would then conclude with this poetic verse:

If a person leaves the beaten tracks, his endeavor will go astray.  
But will anyone leave the beaten tracks, so long as he is a Muslim?<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup> *man yatruku 'l-āthāra qad ḍalla sa'yū-hu—wa hal yatruku 'l-āthāra man kāna muslimā.*

## Concerning the wives of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

**T**he following account is provided by the Shaikh of the Ṣūfis, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Umar as-Suhrawardī.<sup>108</sup> In the twenty-first chapter of his book, *‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif* [Bounties of Divine Knowledge],<sup>109</sup> he informs us:

“We have heard that one of the righteous once said to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir: ‘Why did you get married?’ The Shaikh replied: ‘I did not take a wife, until Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) told me: “You must get married!”’

“The Shaikh is also reported as having said: ‘I was yearning for a wife, over quite a long period, but I did not dare marry, for fear of causing confusion when the time was inappropriate. I therefore endured with patience, until, when the script of destiny had reached its appointed term, Allāh sent me four wives, each of them highly compatible with me in respect of wish and inclination.’”

In his *Ta’rīkh* [History], Ibn an-Najjār informs us: “I once heard ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, the son of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī, say:

“Forty-nine children were born to my father, twenty-seven of them males, and the rest of them females.”

It was al-Jubbā’ī who said: “Our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: ‘Whenever a child was born to me, I would hold the infant in my hand, and say: “This is dead, so remove it from my heart!” Then, if it did in fact die, its death would not affect my feelings in any way, since I had already detached it from my heart, as soon as it came to birth.’

<sup>108</sup> See note 34 on p. 63 above.

<sup>109</sup> A printed edition of this work has been published by ‘Alāmiyya Press, Cairo, A.H. 1358/1939 C.E.

“It happened several times, that the death of one of his children, sometimes a boy and sometimes a girl, occurred on the night of his regular public session [*majlis*], but he never once interrupted his session. He would climb the steps up to the lectern, and address the people in his audience, while the ritual washer [*ghāsil*] was busy washing the corpse. When the ritual washing had been duly completed, they would bring the body to the session. The Shaikh would thereupon descend from the lectern, and perform the funeral prayer over his deceased son or daughter.

May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!”



## Concerning the children of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him, and with all of them).

### • Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (A.H. 522–93)

One of the most distinguished of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s children was Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. He studied Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] under his father, from whom he also received instruction in many other subjects. He took lessons from other teachers, too, including Abū Ghālib ibn al-Bannā’. In his quest for knowledge, he also traveled to the lands of the Persians. At the beginning of the year [A.H.] 543, when his father was still alive, he started teaching at his schoolhouse, where he served as the Shaikh’s deputy. He was little more than twenty years of age at that time.

After his father’s death, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb delivered public sermons, as well as acting as an expert adviser on matters requiring formal legal opinion [*fatwā*]. Many prominent scholars acquired their training from him, including ash-Sharīf al-Ḥusainī al-Baghdādī and Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ ibn Amīrgāh, to name only two of them.

None of his father’s other children achieved greater distinction than Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. He was an outstanding jurist [*faqīh*], and his lectures on questions of scholarly dispute [*khilāf*] were exceptionally brilliant. In the delivery of religious and spiritual exhortation [*wa’z*], he spoke with an eloquent tongue, and in an agreeably witty manner, combining a sweetness of expression with an acute sharpness of mind. He was charming, graceful, wittily amusing, full of good humor and lighthearted playfulness, and polite in his shrewd observations. He exemplified the qualities of chivalry and noble generosity.

The Imām, an-Nāṣir-li-Dini'llāh, appointed him to head the government department charged with the investigation of cases of wrongdoing and miscarriages of justice [*maẓālim*], so all the pressing needs of the people were brought to his attention.

According to adh-Dhahabī: "He readily engaged in conversion, delivered sermons, provided formal legal opinions, took part in public debate, and was often consulted by the Supreme Council of State [*ad-Dīwān al-ʿAzīz*]. He was an elegant man of letters, who knew how to inject a gentle sense of humor into people's feelings."

Stories about him have been handed down by a host of reporters, including ad-Danīthī and Ibn Khalīl. Ibn Rajab tells us, in his *Ṭabaqāt* [Generations]: "Al-Fārisī has mentioned that he took lessons from Ibn al-Ḥusain, Ibn ar-Raʿwānī, Abū Ghālib, Ibn al-Bannāʾ, among other leading scholars. He describes Shaikh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb as an exceptionally qualified jurist [*faqīh*], a pious abstainer [*ẓāhid*], and a wise counsellor [*wāʿiẓ*]. He could always count on an excellent reception. In the year [A.H.] 583, [the Imām] an-Nāṣir appointed him to head the government department charged with the investigation of cases of wrongdoing and miscarriages of justice [*maẓālim*]. He was highly astute, one of the most elegant figures in Baghdād, and renowned for his wonderful sense of humor. Of all his father's children, none was more brilliantly intelligent than he."

In the words of another reporter: "His pen had a very sharp point, especially when he used it to write down a legal opinion [*fatwā*]. He is known to have conferred a diploma on Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb ibn Abi ʿd-Dunyā."

Shaikh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was born in the month of Shaʿbān, in the year [A.H.] 522, in the city of Baghdād. It was there that his mortal life ended, on the night of the 25th of Shawwāl, in the year [A.H.] 593, and he was buried in the graveyard of al-Ḥalba [the Racetrack District]. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

#### • Shaikh ʿĪsā (d. A.H. 573)

Shaikh ʿĪsā studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father, from whom he also received instruction in other important subjects. He also attended the classes of Abu ʿl-Ḥasan ibn Ḍaramā, as well as those

of other leading scholars. He became a teacher, a lecturer, a preacher, and an expert legal consultant. He composed a number of literary works, including the book entitled *Jawāhir al-Asrār wa Latā'if al-Anwār* [Jewels of the Mysteries and Subtle Aspects of the Lights], on the science of Ṣūfism.

He moved [from Baghdād] to Egypt, where he lectured and delivered sermons. More than a few inhabitants of that country acquired their training from him, including Abū Turāb Rabī'a ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaḍramī aṣ-Ṣanā'ī, Musāfir ibn Ya'mar al-Miṣrī, Ḥāmid ibn Aḥmad al-Irtājī, Muḥammad al-Faqīh al-Muḥaddith, and 'Abd al-Khāliq ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Qurashī al-Umawī al-Miṣrī.

As reported by Ibn an-Najjār, in his *Ta'rīkh* [History]: "After his father's death, Shaikh 'Īsā left Baghdād and lived from a time in Syria. While in Damascus, he attended the classes held by 'Alī ibn Mahdī ibn al-Mufraj al-Hilālī. That was in the year [A.H.] 562. He also gave talks about his father.

"Then he moved to Egypt, where he stayed until the time of his death. He used to preach from the pulpit, and he was well received by the people. As in Damascus, he also gave lectures about his father. His sayings have been related by Aḥmad ibn Maisara ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥallāl al-Ḥanbalī." (Here ends the quotation from Ibn an-Najjār.)

It was al-Mundhirī who said: "Shaikh 'Īsā moved to Egypt, where he gave lectures and delivered sermons. It was in that country that he died."

Ibn an-Najjār has told us: "On the tombstone of 'Īsā, the son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī, in the graveyard [*qarāfa*] [below the Muqattam hills] near Cairo, I read the inscription: 'He died on the 12th of Ramaḍān, in the year [A.H.] 573.' Here is a sample of his poetry (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him):

Convey my salutation to a land that dearly loved me,  
and tell them that the stranger is filled with ardent longing.

If they ask you how I am, after leaving them behind,  
be sure to say: 'He is burning in the fires of separation.

For he has no companion to bring him near to you,  
nor can he find a way to make the long journey home.'

Life is always hard for a stranger, in any foreign land,  
and who befriends the stranger, in countries not his own?

“Shaikh ‘Īsā is also the author of these poetic verses (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him):

I am keeping a yearlong fast, if I do not see you all,  
but on the day when I see you, my fast becomes unlawful.<sup>110</sup>

My heart incurred no blame, in yearning for you all,  
so my yearning has proved to be a blessing to my honor!

• Shaikh Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (A.H. 532–602)

Shaikh Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father, from whom he also received instruction in other important subjects. He also attended the classes of Ibn Manṣūr ‘Abd ar-Raḥman ibn Muḥammad al-Qazzāz [the Silk Merchant], as well as those of other leading scholars. He became a lecturer, a preacher and a professor, and his students were by no means few in number. He was brilliant, yet modest to the point of humility.

He rode off to Al-Jibāl, and made his home there, in the course of the year [A.H.] 580. That was after he had fought in the campaign [against the Crusaders] at Ashkelon [‘*Asqalān*], and visited the noble city of Jerusalem [*al-Quds*]. His descendants still live in Al-Jibāl, to this very day.

He was born on the 27th of Shawwāl in the year [A.H.] 532, and he died in al-Jibāl on Wednesday, the 18th of Rabi‘ al-Awwal, in the year [A.H.] 602. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

• Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. A.H. 575)

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father, from whom he also received instruction in other important subjects. [Like his brother, Shaikh Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] he also attended the classes of Ibn Manṣūr ‘Abd ar-Raḥman ibn Muḥammad al-Qazzāz [the Silk Merchant], as well as those of other leading scholars. He was an excellent calligrapher, a follower of the Ṣūfī path [*sabīl at-taṣawwuf*], and a close companion of the lords of hearts [*arbāb al-qulūb*]. [His brother] ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, of whom we shall

<sup>110</sup> A poetic allusion to the fact that fasting is unlawful on the Day of Festival [‘Īd]. For traditional reports concerning the practice of fasting (in the daytime) all year long [*ṣiyām ad-dahr*], see the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. (Vol. 4, pp. 5–7, of the Al-Baz edition.)

have more to say in due course, did take a few lessons from him, though he never became his full-time student.

As a fledgling Šūfi [*mutaṣawwif*],<sup>111</sup> Shaikh ‘Abd al-Jabbār used to mingle with the spiritual paupers [*fuqarā’*] and the lords of hearts [*arbāb al-qulūb*]. He used to write in an exquisite calligraphic script. He died about twenty-eight years earlier than ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, when he was still a young man, on 19th of Dhu ‘l-Ḥijja in the year [A.H.] 575. He was buried within the confines of his father’s guesthouse [*ribāṭ*] in the Racetrack District [*al-Ḥalba*] of Baghdād. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

• Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (A.H. 528–603)

As for Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, that exemplary guide, who knew the entire Qur’ān by heart, he studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father, from whom he also received instruction in many other traditional subjects. He also attended the classes of other notable scholars, including Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ibn Ḍaramā. This background prepared him well for his own career, in which he gave lectures and dictation, provided training and education, delivered formal opinions on legal problems, and engaged in public debate. More than a few of his students graduated with distinction, including Ishāq ibn Aḥmad ibn Ghānim al-‘Athlī, and ‘Alī ibn ‘Alī Khaṭīb Zūbā, to name only two of them.

In his *Ta’rīkh* [History], al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn an-Najjār informs us: “His father taught him in his early youth, and later he studied under the following professors:

- Abu ‘l-Ḥasan Muḥammad aṣ-Šā’igh
- al-Qāḍī [the Judge] Abu ‘l-Faḍl Muḥammad al-Armawī
- Abu ‘l-Qasam Sa‘īd ibn al-Bannā’
- Abu ‘l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir al-Ḥāfiẓ
- Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn az-Zāghawānī

<sup>111</sup> In the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has explained:

As for the fledgling Šūfi [*mutaṣawwif*], he is someone who has set himself the task of becoming a Šūfi, and who is prepared to work hard at becoming a Šūfi. (For more on this subject, see Vol. 5, pp. 12–21, of the al-Baz edition.)

- Abu 'l-Muẓaffar Muḥammad al-Hāshimī
- Abu 'l-Mu'āfā Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn as-Samīn
- Abu 'l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn al-Baṭīr."

Further along in this same book, Ibn an-Najjār relates: "Shaikh 'Abd ar-Razzāq also pursued his own quest for knowledge. He learned many lessons from the colleagues of Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn al-Baṭīr and Abū 'Abdi'llāh ibn Ṭalḥa, as well as several other teachers. Then he went on to learn from our Shaikhs and others of their caliber. He took many notes in his own handwriting, both for himself and for other people. Although his handwriting was an awful scribble, I learned a great deal from reading those notes of his.

"Shaikh 'Abd ar-Razzāq was a *ḥāfiẓ* [one who has learned the whole of the Qur'ān by heart]. He was thoroughly proficient, trustworthy and truthful. Whenever he spoke, he gave expression to a fine understanding. As an expert jurist [*faqīh*], he adhered to the legal doctrine [*madhhab*] of Imām Abū 'Abdi'llāh Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.<sup>112</sup> He was piously devout [*wari'*], deeply committed to his religion [*mutadayyin*], and dedicated to the frequent practice of worshipful service [*'ibāda*]. He performed his devotions in the seclusion of his own home, away from the public view, and only came out [to the mosque] in order to take part in the congregational prayers. He had a great fondness for the narration of traditional stories and reports, and he held the seekers of knowledge in high esteem.

"He was very generous with anything he had at his disposal, and chivalry was natural to him, despite the paucity of his material means. His attributes of character were excellent. He was modest to the point of humility, and adroit in all the skills of courtesy and politeness. His life-style was extremely simple, and he endured his poverty with steadfast patience. He was noble by nature, and virtuously conformed to the standards set by the righteous predecessors [*salaf*]." (Here ends this abbreviated excerpt from the work of Ibn an-Najjār.)

The following passage is an excerpt from *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* [The History of Islām], by al-Ḥāfiẓ adh-Dhahabī:

"Abū Bakr 'Abd ar-Razzāq al-Jīlī (to whose name the epithets

<sup>112</sup> See note 53 on p. 90 above.

‘al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbalī al-Muḥaddith al-Ḥāfiz’ were eventually added): His reputation is that of a trustworthy person [*thiqa*] and a pious ascetic [*zāhid*]. He learned much from his father’s instruction, then pursued further studies on his own. He devoted himself tirelessly to the quest for knowledge, especially of the Qur’ān and the Tradition, until he was ready to speak and teach on his own account. He is also known by the epithet ‘al-Ḥalbī,’ an adjectival reference to al-Ḥalba [the Racetrack District], which is a neighborhood on the eastern side of Baghdād.” (Here ends this abbreviated excerpt from the work of adh-Dhahabī.)

The author of *ar-Rawḍ* [The Gardens]<sup>113</sup> informs us: “Abū Shāmma, in his *Ta’rīkh* [History], describes Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq as ‘a pious ascetic, a devout worshipper, a trustworthy person, satisfied with very little material wealth.’ Reliable reports concerning Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq have been transmitted by ad-Danīthī, Ibn Najjār, aḍ-Ḍiyā’, an-Najīb ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, at-Taqī al-Buldānī, to name but a few. The Shaikh awarded a diploma to each of the following graduates:

- Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān
- al-Kamāl ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm
- Aḥmad ibn Shaibān
- Khadija, the daughter of ash-Shihāb ibn Rājih
- Ismā‘īl al-‘Asqalānī
- al-Fakhr ‘Alī al-Muqādasa.”

(Here ends the quotation from *ar-Rawḍ* [The Garden].)

In his *Ṭabaqāt* [Generations], al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī states [concerning Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq]: “He had a remarkable knowledge of the [Ḥanbalī] legal doctrine [*madhhab*], yet his knowledge of the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*] far exceeded his knowledge of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. In the words of Ibn Nuṭṭa: ‘He was someone who knew the entire Qur’ān by heart [*ḥāfiz*], a trustworthy and reliable person.’ He has been highly commended by al-Danīthī, not to mention many others.’ According to one report about him, he

<sup>113</sup> This is presumably an abbreviation of *ar-Rawḍ az-Zāhir* [The Beautiful Gardens], by Ibrāhīm ad-Dairī ash-Shāfi‘ī, referred to on p. 15 above.

spent thirty years without raising his head toward the heaven above, due to a sense of shame in the sight of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

“He was born in the evening of Monday, the 18th of Dhu ’l-Qa’da, in the year [A.H.] 528, and he died in Baghdād on the night of Saturday, the 6th of Shawwāl, in the year [A.H.] 603. He was buried at the Battle Gate [*Bāb Ḥarb*] in Baghdād.”

As we learn from Ibn an-Najjār: “When morning came around, the call to his funeral prayer [*aṣ-ṣalāt ‘alaih*] was proclaimed in all the districts of Baghdād, and a host of people gathered where he lay. His bier [*jīnāza*] was then carried in solemn procession to the prayer-ground [*muṣallā*] on the outskirts of the city, and the funeral prayer was performed for him there.

“Then he was borne, on the heads of the men, to the congregational mosque [*jāmi‘*] of ar-Ruṣāfa, where his funeral prayer was again performed. It was next performed at the Gate of the Graveyard of the Caliphs [*Bāb Turbat al-Khulafā’*], then on the bank of the River Tigris [*ad-Dijla*], in the presence of the market gardeners. From there, he was ferried across to the western side, where his funeral prayer was performed at the Harem Gate [*Bāb al-Ḥarīm*]. He was then taken into [the ruined area of] al-Kharibiyya, and his funeral prayer was repeated. Then he was carried to the graveyard of Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal]. The funeral prayer was again performed for him there, and there he was buried. That was indeed a memorable day.”

(Here ends the quotation from Ibn an-Najjār. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon both him and Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq!)

• Shaikh Ibrāhīm (d. A.H. 592)

Shaikh Ibrāhīm studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father, from whom he also received instruction in other traditional subjects. He also attended the classes of Sa’id ibn al-Bannā’, to name only one of his other teachers. He migrated [from Baghdād] to Wāsiṭ, and it was there that he died, in the year [A.H.] 592. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

• Shaikh Muḥammad (d. A.H. 600)

Shaikh Muḥammad studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father, from whom he also received instruction in other traditional subjects. He also attended the classes of other scholarly teachers, including al-Bannā' and Abu 'l-Waqt, and became a qualified narrator of Tradition. He died in Baghdād, on the 25th of Dhu 'l-Qa'da, in the year [A.H.] 600, and was buried that same day in the graveyard of al-Ḥalba [the Racetrack District]. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

• Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh (A.H. 508–87 or 89)

Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh received traditional instruction from his father, and also from al-Bannā'. The year of his birth was [A.H.] 508, and he was taken unto the mercy of Allāh (Exalted is He) in Baghdād, on the 17th (some say the 18th) of Ṣafar, in the year [A.H.] 589 (some say 587). He was the eldest of all the brothers, according to what has been reported.

• Shaikh Yaḥyā (A.H. 550–600)

Shaikh Yaḥyā studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father, from whom he also received instruction in other traditional subjects. He also attended the classes of other scholarly teachers, including Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Bāqī. He became a qualified narrator of Tradition, and the people derived great benefit from him. He went to live in Egypt. He was the youngest of all the children of our master the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He was born in [A.H.] 550, approximately eleven years prior to the death of his father.

While he was in Egypt, he was blessed with a son, whom he named 'Abd al-Qādir, and whom he brought to Baghdād when he was already an adult. Shaikh Yaḥyā died in Baghdād, in the month of Sha'bān of the year [A.H.] 600. When the call to his funeral prayer was proclaimed, a large congregation assembled. His funeral service was then conducted in his father's schoolhouse. He was buried next to his brother, Shaikh 'Abd al-Wahhāb, within the confines of his father's guesthouse [*ribāṭ*] in al-Ḥalba [the Racetrack District]. His mother was an Abyssinian woman [*Ḥabashiyya*].

It was Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb who said: “My father once fell sick, with an illness that pushed him to the very brink of death. We all sat around him, weeping, while he lay in a fainting spell. Then he regained consciousness, and said: ‘You must not weep over me, for I am not about to die! I still have Yaḥyā in my loins, and he will certainly make his appearance this world.’ We had no idea what he was talking about, and we assumed that he must be deranged by the sickness.

“As it turned out, of course, our father was soon restored to good health. He cohabited with an Abyssinian maid [*jāriya*], and she produced a son. He named the boy Yaḥyā, and he was the last of his children. Then, after a very long interval, the Shaikh died.” May Allāh be well pleased with them, each and every one!

• Shaikh Mūsā (A.H. 539–618)

Shaikh Mūsā studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father, from whom he also received instruction in other traditional subjects. He also attended the classes of other scholarly teachers, including Ibn al-Bannā’. He began his own teaching career in Damascus, where he settled and prospered, and where the people derived great benefit from him. He spent some time in Egypt, then returned to Damascus.

Shaikh Mūsā was born at end of Rabi‘ al-Awwal, in the year [A.H.] 539. He died in the al-‘Aqība quarter of Damascus, in the first week of Jumādā’l-Ākhira in the year [A.H.] 618, and was buried at the foot of Mount Qāsiyūn. He was the last of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s children to die. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

As Shaikh ‘Umar ibn al-Ḥājib informs us, in his *Mu‘jam* [Encyclopedia]: “Shaikh Mūsā was a jurist of the Ḥanbali school [*madhhab*]. He was a Shaikh who derived his authority from a house of Tradition, abstinence and piety, and he was one of the kind whose house is pointed out. This Shaikh of ours returned to Damascus and settled there, and it was there that he died. He was a graceful Shaikh, very natural in his movements. His constitution was delicate, and sickness plagued him in the latter part of his life, until he died. His funeral prayer was performed at the Mujāhidiyya College, and he was buried on Mount Qāsiyūn. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!”

## Concerning the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with them all).

### • Shaikh Sulaimān ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (A.H. 553–611)

Shaikh Sulaimān ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī-al-aṣl al-Ḥusainī al-Baghdādī-al-mawlid received his traditional education from several scholarly teachers. He was one of the children of the Shaikhs and transmitters, but he is not known to have narrated anything himself. His birth occurred in the year [A.H.] 553, and he died on Wednesday, the 9th of Jumādā ’l-Ākhira, in the year [A.H.] 611, about twenty days earlier than his brother, ‘Abd as-Salām (of whom we shall have more to say in due course). He was buried in the graveyard of al-Ḥalba, next to his father. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them both, and upon us!

### • Dāwūd ibn Sulaimān ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d. A.H. 640)

Shaikh Sulaimān’s son, Dāwūd, studied Islāmic jurisprudence and other traditional subjects under his grandfather, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, and became a narrator of Tradition. As we are informed by al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad ibn Rāfi‘, in his *Ta’rīkh* [History]: “Dāwūd ibn Sulaimān ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī studied traditional subjects under his grandfather, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. His own students included al-Ḥāfiẓ ad-Dimyātī, who attended his classes in Baghdād.

“He died in Baghdād, on the evening of Saturday, the 18th of Rabi‘ al-Awwal, in the year [A.H.] 640. He was buried on the Sunday, in the graveyard of al-Ḥalba, next to his father and his grandfather.

I have been told that he spent some time in [the North Egyptian town of] Damietta [*Dīmyāṭ*].”

In the words of ash-Sharīf ‘Izz ad-Dīn: “He belonged to the house of righteousness, abstinence and Tradition.”

To this very day, Ma‘arrat an-Nu‘mān, a suburb of Ḥamāh [in Syria], is home to a community of his descendants, known as the Dāwūdiyya. May Allāh employ them in good service! I once met with one of their members, called Shaikh ‘Abd al-Karīm, and I asked him about his lineage. He told me that he is a descendant of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, and that his father’s name is ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Ṣadaqa ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn Dāwūd ibn Aḥmad ibn Manṣūr ibn Sulaimān ibn Dāwūd ibn Saif ad-Dīn Sulaimān ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥusainī. May Allāh employ him in good service!

He also told me that he has a paternal cousin, called Ṣadaqa ibn Shaḥḥāta ibn Ṣadaqa ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn Dāwūd ibn Aḥmad ibn Sulaimān ibn Dāwūd ibn Sharaf ad-Dīn Sulaimān ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥusainī. May Allāh employ him in good service!

• Shaikh ‘Abd as-Salām ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (A.H. 548–621)

Shaikh ‘Abd as-Salām ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father and his grandfather, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. He became a professor, and delivered formal opinions on legal problems. He was also appointed to a number of governmental positions. He adhered to the Ḥanbalī school [*madhhab*] of Islāmic jurisprudence. He once performed the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*] in the capacity of custodian of the [black, brocaded] covering of the Noble House [*kiswat al-Bait ash-Sharīf*], and as supervisor of the ceremonies observed at the two noble Sanctuaries [*Ḥaramain*] [in Mecca and Medina].

Shaikh ‘Abd as-Salām was born on the night of the 8th of Dhu ‘l-Ḥijja, in the year [A.H.] 548. He died in Baghdād, on the 3rd of Rajab in [A.H.] 621, having reached the peak of an eminent career in the latter part of his life. He was buried on the day of his death, in the graveyard of al-Ḥalba.

• Shaikh Muḥammad ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz

Shaikh Muḥammad ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī received a traditional education from several prominent scholars. His home was in al-Jibāl, which also became his place of burial.

• Shaikha Zahra bint ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz

Shaikha Zahra, the sister of Shaikh Muḥammad ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, received a traditional education and became a traditional teacher in her own right. She died in Baghdād. I have not been able to ascertain her dates of birth and death, nor those of her brother. May Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon them both, and may He allow us to derive benefit from them. *Āmīn*.

• Shaikh Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (A.H. 564–633)

That exemplary guide, Shaikh Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Sayyidi-nā ‘sh-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī-al-aṣl al-Baghdādī-al-mawlid Abū Ṣāliḥ, studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father and other experts in the field. He also received instruction in other traditional subjects, from his father, from his paternal uncle, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, and from Abū Hāshim ar-Rawshānī, as well as from other scholars. He became a professor and a narrator of Tradition, taught by dictation, provided formal opinions on legal problems, and engaged in public debate.

He was appointed to the office of Chief Justice [*Qadā’ al-Qudāt*] in [Baghdād] the City of Peace [*Madīnat as-Salām*]. He adhered to the legal doctrine [*madhhab*] of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and he thus became the first of his [Ḥanbalī] colleagues to be summoned to the post of Chief Justice. His appointment took place on Wednesday, the 8th of Dhu ‘l-Qa‘da, in the year [A.H.] 622, in the days of [the Caliphate of] Imām az-Zāhir-bi-Amri’llāh. The bracelet of honor was conferred upon him, and his confirmation was proclaimed in the three major congregational mosques [*jawāmi’*] of the City of Peace. He thus embarked on an excellent and praiseworthy career, in which he always followed the straight path.

He used to dictate the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*] at his session, and the people would write it down. When he went out to the congregational mosque [*jāmi'*], to attend the Friday prayer, he used to walk on foot. At his courthouse session, the witnesses used to record some of his comments in writing, with his permission. His appointment to high office did not cause him to alter his character. He retained his humble modesty, and kept to the life-style for which he was known before his appointment.

He continued his work as a judge [*qāḍī*] for the remainder of az-Zāhir's life. When the Caliphate [*Khilāfa*] passed to az-Zāhir's son, Imām al-Mustanṣir-bi'llāh, the new Caliph confirmed him in office for a period of four months and a few days. He then dismissed him, on the 23rd of Dhu 'l-Qa'da, in the year [A.H.] 623.

During his early youth, his father had taught him many a valuable lesson. He was trustworthy and honorable. He had a keenly inquiring mind, and always verified the authenticity of any information he transmitted. He was extremely well versed in the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*], and his grasp of the legal doctrine [*madhhab*] was extensive. When discussion revolved around questions of scholarly disagreement [*khilāf*], he spoke with eloquence and wit. His mode of expression was charming, and he conveyed his meaning in a beautiful style. He was modest to the point of humility, gentle and kind by nature, gracefully refined in social relations, good-humored, sagaciously polite, courageous, a man among men, undaunted by any problem or danger that might arise.

He is known to have said (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him): "I was once in the office of the Grand Vizier, al-'Amthī, writing my document concerning the licenses granted to Christians. While I was in the building, I found myself in the company of Muḥammad ibn Munahḥib ar-Razzāz the Traditionist, Ibn Zuhair al-'Adl, and Ibn al-Marwazī, representing the Shaikh of Shaikhs. Suddenly, in came a man of dignified appearance, dressed in a fine suit of clothes. As soon as he uttered the greeting of peace, they all sprang to attention and declared their readiness to serve him, so I followed their example. I assumed that he must be one of the Islāmic jurists [*fuqahā'*], so I asked about him, and they told me: 'He is Ibn Karam, the Jew [*Yahūdī*], the governor of the Imperial Mint [*Dār aḍ-Ḍarb*].'

“The man was obviously accustomed to dignity and respect, for he went and sat himself down, adopting the posture of someone condescending to receive our homage. ‘Get up,’ I told him, ‘and come over here!’ He came and stood in front of me, and I said to him: ‘Woe unto you! When you first entered, I imagined that you must be one of the jurists of Islām. That is why I stood up in your honor, but in my estimation—woe unto you!—You are not of that stature.’ I repeated this rebuke several times, while he stood there, saying: ‘May Allāh preserve you! May Allāh grant you long life!’ Then I said to him: ‘Scram over there, far away from us!’ So off he went.”

Shaikh Naṣr is also known to have said: “In the month of Rajab, I was entitled to collect a fee from the Christian alms-due [*ṣadaqa Nāṣiriyya*], which I received from the priests [*badriyya*].<sup>114</sup> It so happened, one year, that this event took place on a Wednesday, when I had gone to pay a visit to the tomb of Imām Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal]. When I returned from the visit, I discovered that the people had already collected their fees, and had gone their separate ways. Someone told me: ‘Your fee is with the Christian called Thomas [*Tūmā an-Naṣrānī*]. It was placed in his care, so you had better find him and collect it from him.’ To this I responded: ‘By Allāh, I shall not go looking for him, nor shall I seek my sustenance from an unbeliever [*kāfir*].’ I promptly returned to my house, putting my trust in Allāh (Glorious be to Him), and reciting these poetic verses to myself:

O my soul, there is no substitute for our religion,  
so forget about this world, and do not quarrel with me!

It ill befits us to go chasing a polytheist [*mushrik*],  
since polytheism is the source of every sinful error.

If we have any debt to pay, we do have a Creator  
who will settle it—such is my hopeful expectation.

“That fee remained with the Christian. I did not venture to seek him out, and he did not send it to me, until he was killed (may Allāh curse him!) in the following year, in the month of Jumādā’l-Ūlā. The gold was then taken from his house, and delivered to me.”

<sup>114</sup> The term *badriyya* (or *bādiriyya*) is the plural form of *badrī* (or *bādirī*), which represents the Arabic pronunciation of the Italian word “*padre*.”

The following excerpts are taken from the *Ṭabaqāt* [Generations] of al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Rajab:

“[Shaikh Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq] was a jurist, a debater, a Traditionist, a pious ascetic, and a preacher. He became the Chief Justice [Qāḍi ‘l-Quḍāt], the Shaikh of the age, the pillar of the religion [‘imād ad-dīn]. He read the Qur’ān in his early youth, and learned the Prophetic Tradition [Ḥadīth] from his father and his paternal uncle, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb.... He was awarded diplomas by Abu ‘l-‘Alā’ al-Hamadānī, Abū Mūsā al-Madinī, and other professors.... He possessed an eloquence and fluency of speech, and an excellent manner of expression. He issued formal opinions on legal problems, and he became the director of his grandfather’s schoolhouse....

“When the Caliph an-Nāṣir died, he was succeeded by his son, az-Zāhir, who proved to be one of the best of all the Caliphs [Khulafā’]. He was one of their finest in life-style, and one of their most distinguished in religious devotion, righteousness and justice. He abolished nonreligious taxes [mukūs], rejected all forms of wrongdoing and oppression [maẓālim], and took great pains to ensure the proper implementation of the rules of the Sacred Law [ahkām ash-Sharī‘a]....

“According to Ibn al-Athīr: ‘If someone were to say: “No one like him [az-Zāhir] has reigned as Caliph, not since ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz,”<sup>115</sup> the speaker would be telling the truth.’ For every position of authority, he would always select the most righteous candidate he could find. That is why he appointed Abū Ṣāliḥ [Shaikh Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq] to this judgeship [qaḍā’], the supreme judicial office in his empire. It is said that the Shaikh attached a precondition to his acceptance of the post: namely, that he must have the power to enforce the inheritance rights of close relatives [dhawī ‘l-arḥām]. The Caliph told him: ‘Give every holder of a right his right and proper due. Beware of offending Allāh, but do not be afraid of offending anyone other than Him.’ He commanded him to insist, without compromise, on the delivery of what was rightfully due, in every case where a person’s right had been established by lawful means.

<sup>115</sup> ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān, the Umayyad Caliph, who reigned from A.H. 99–101/715–17 C.E. A man of piety and learning, he is renowned for his enlightened approach to government in a period of increasing worldliness.

“The Caliph also sent him ten thousand dinārs [gold coins], with which to settle the debts of those debtors, held in his prison, who could not find the means of settlement. Then he charged him with the supervision of the pious endowments [*awqāf*] available for general purposes, as well as the pious endowments earmarked for the Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanafī universities, the Sulṭān’s congregational mosque [*jāmi‘*], and the congregational mosque of Ibn al-Muṭṭalib. The Shaikh was thereby empowered to appoint and dismiss professors at all the universities [*madāris*], including the Niẓāmiyya [the most famous of them all].

“When az-Zāhir died, his son al-Mustanṣir confirmed the Shaikh in office, for a considerable period of time. The new Caliph summoned him, on the occasion of the inaugural pledge of allegiance [*mubāya‘a*], in order to establish him in a position which he had temporarily delegated to someone else. He had not yet announced his decision, when the Shaikh said to him: ‘How I wish that your father had never appointed me!’ It was then that the Caliph declared his reappointment.

“During the days of his term in office, the call to prayer [*adhān*] would be given at his courtroom door, and he would lead the congregation in the performance of the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*]. When he went out to the mosque, he would go as a pedestrian. He dressed in simple cotton clothes. In giving judgment, he always paid scrupulous attention to the facts of the case. He was strongly committed to the truth, and his way of life was modeled on the practice of the righteous predecessors [*salaf*]. When al-Mustanṣir eventually dismissed him, he uttered these poetic verses:

I praised Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He),  
when the judgment on me was dismissal from the office of judge.

I give thanks to al-Mustanṣir, the victorious [*manṣūr*],  
and I pray for him over and above the ordinary supplication.

“No one from among our [Ḥanbalī] companions, so far as I know, was ever appointed Chief Justice [*Qāḍī ‘l-Quḍāt*] before him. In Egypt, for sure, none but he ever held that office. After his dismissal, he settled in the family schoolhouse, teaching, providing formal opinions on legal problems, and attending the public sessions and private meetings held by eminent figures. Then al-Mustanṣir commissioned a guesthouse [*ribāṭ*] for him. He had it built in [the

district of Baghdād known as] Dair ar-Rūm [Monastery of the Greeks], and installed him in it as a Shaikh. The Caliph treated him with great honor and respect, and used to send him ample funds, for him to distribute as he saw fit.

“The Shaikh compiled a book, to which he gave the title *Irshād al-Mubtadi’īn* [Guidance for Beginners]. Many students have learned Islāmic jurisprudence from it, and found it very useful. In the *Qaṣīda Lāmiyya* [Ode in which every line ends with the letter *lām* (-l)], aṣ-Ṣarṣarī eulogizes Imām Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] and his companions (may Allāh be well pleased with them all). In one verse, the poet says:

In our own age, in the field of Islāmic jurisprudence,  
Abū Ṣāliḥ Naṣr is a guide for every hopeful student.”

This brings us to the end of our abbreviated excerpt from the work of that highly erudite scholar, that exemplary guide, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him).

Shaikh Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq was born on the night of Saturday the 14th of the month of Rabī‘ al-Ākhir, in the year [A.H.] 564. He died shortly before daybreak, on the night of Sunday the 16th of Shawwāl, in the year [A.H.] 633. He was buried at the Battle Gate [*Bāb Ḥarb*], beside the tombstone of Imām Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal].

His mother was Umm al-Karam Tāj an-Nisā’ [Crown of Women] bint Faḍā’il at-Tarkīnī. She studied and became a narrator of Tradition. She was endowed with an abundant share of goodness and righteousness. She died in Baghdād, and was buried at the Battle Gate [*Bāb Ḥarb*]. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them both!

• Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (A.H. 560–606)

Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī received traditional instruction from Shahda bint al-Ibrī and Khadīja bint Aḥmad an-Nahrawānī, as well as from other teachers.

He was born on Wednesday the 14th of Dhu ’l-Qa‘da, in the year [A.H.] 560. He died in Baghdād, on Thursday the 7th of the month of Rabī‘ al-Awwal, in the year [A.H.] 606, and was buried that same day, at the Battle Gate [*Bāb al-Ḥarb*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

• Shaikh Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq

Shaikh Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī received traditional instruction from several teachers. He studied Islāmic jurisprudence, and became a narrator of Tradition.

He died in Baghdād, and was buried in the graveyard of Imām Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal]. May Allāh be well pleased with them both! (I have been unable to ascertain the dates of his birth and his death.)

• Shaikh Abu ‘l-Maḥāsin Faḍlu’llāh ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (d. A.H. 656)

Shaikh Abu ‘l-Maḥāsin Faḍlu’llāh ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father and other experts in that field. He also received traditional instruction from his father and his paternal uncle, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb, as well as from Abu ‘l-Faṭḥ and other scholars.

He died in Baghdād, as a martyr [*shahīd*] at the hands of the Tartars [*Tatar*], in the month of Ṣafar in the year [A.H.] 656.

• Shaikha Sa‘āda bint ‘Abd ar-Razzāq

Shaikha Sa‘āda bint ‘Abd ar-Razzāq was one of the two sisters of Shaikh Abu ‘l-Maḥāsin Faḍlu’llāh. She received traditional instruction from ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq and other scholars. She died in Baghdād, and [her brother Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq] Abū Ṣāliḥ conducted her funeral service.

• Shaikha ‘Ā’isha bint ‘Abd ar-Razzāq

Shaikha ‘Ā’isha bint ‘Abd ar-Razzāq was the other sister of Shaikh Abu ‘l-Maḥāsin Faḍlu’llāh. Like Shaikha Sa‘āda, she received traditional instruction from ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq and other scholars. She went on to become a narrator of Tradition in her own right. She was a good woman, a pious abstainer, devoted to worshipful service, and righteous. She died in Baghdād, and was buried the next morning at the Battle Gate [*Bāb al-Ḥarb*]. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon both the two sisters!

## The children and grandchildren of Shaikh Abū Ṣāliḥ Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq.

- Shaikh Abū Mūsā Yaḥyā ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq

Shaikh Abū Mūsā Yaḥyā is mentioned in the *Mu‘jam* [Alphabetic Encyclopedia] of al-Ḥāfiẓ Sharaf ad-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mu‘min ibn Khalaf ad-Dimyāṭī, who lists him as:

“Yaḥyā ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, the Baghdādī by birth and residence [*al-mawlid-wa ’d-dār*], the Ḥanbalī, the jurist [*faqīh*], the preacher [*wā‘iẓ*].”

According to al-Quṭb al-Yūnānī: “Shaikh Yaḥyā ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father and other experts in that field. He also received traditional instruction from his father, and went on to become a narrator of Tradition and a preacher. He had a fine way of speaking, in the tongue of those who specialize in the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*]. His poetry was delicately refined, as when he spoke of himself in these verses:

He quaffs the drink that is poured for him, but his intoxication never  
distracts him from his comrade, nor is he distracted from the cup.

His drunkenness obeyed him, till he mastered the state of friendship,  
and then, behold, he was one of the most marvelous of people!”

(Our informant makes no mention of Shaikh Yaḥyā’s death.)

- Amatu’llāh Zainab bint Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq

As for Amatu’llāh Zainab bint Abī Ṣāliḥ Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh Abī Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ al-Jīlī, she received traditional instruction from Zaid ibn Yaḥyā ibn

Hibati'llāh. She conferred a diploma on the Shaikh of the Qur'ān-reciters [*qurrā'*], at the sanctuary [*ḥaram*] of al-Khalil Burhān ad-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn 'Umar al-Ja'barī.

This information is related by the author of *ar-Rawḍ az-Zāhir* [The Beautiful Gardens],<sup>116</sup> who mentions neither her death nor her birth. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them both [Amatu'llāh Zainab and her brother Yahyā].

• Shaikh Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq (d. A.H. 656)

Shaikh Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī-al-aṣl al-Baghḍādī-al-mawlid: He studied Islāmic jurisprudence under his father and other experts in that field. He also received traditional instruction from his father, as well as from other scholars. He bore a striking resemblance to his father's grandfather, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

As we are informed in the *Ṭabaqāt* [Generations] of al-Ḥāfiẓ Zain ad-Dīn Abu 'l-Faraj 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn Rajab:

"Shaikh Abū Naṣr Muḥammad received traditional instruction from his father, as well as from many other scholars, including al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn al-Murtaḍā al-'Alawī, Abū Ishāq Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Armawī, 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Iṣfahānī, and Ibn al-Mushtarī. He was an active seeker of knowledge, and a student of Islāmic jurisprudence.

"He was a learned scholar, pious and ascetic. He held classes in his [great-] grandfather's schoolhouse, and engaged in a constant pursuit of knowledge till the day he died. When Shaikh Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq was appointed to the office of Chief Justice [*Qaḍā' al-Quḍāt*], he appointed his son to a judicial and administrative position in the seat of the Caliphate. He attended only one session in the courtroom, however, before tendering his resignation. He then moved into their family schoolhouse by the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Azaj*], and never returned to that official post. In taking that decision, he was motivated by a sense of aloofness from passing judgment, and an inclination toward pious detachment.

<sup>116</sup> See note 113 on p. 182 above.

“He became a narrator of Tradition, and one of his students was al-Ḥāfiẓ ad-Dimyāṭī, who has mentioned him in his *Mu‘jam* [Alphabetical Encyclopedia]. Ibn ad-Dawālībī mentions that he also took traditional instruction from him.

“He died in Baghdād on the night of Monday the 12th of Shawwāl, in the year [A.H.] 656. He was buried beside his great-grandfather, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, within the confines of his schoolhouse. His death occurred shortly before the catastrophe [*wāqi‘a*] [of the invasion and sacking of Baghdād]. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!”

“Shaikh Abū Naṣr Muḥammad fathered these three children: Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh, and Shaikh Aḥmad.

• Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr Muḥammad (d. A.H. 681)

“[The latter is also known as] Shaikh Ṣāḥib ad-Dīn Abu ‘s-Sa‘ūd Aḥmad al-Jilī-al-aṣl al-Baghdādī-al-mawlid. He was eloquent and graceful. He gave wise instruction at his [great-great-] grandfather’s schoolhouse, and delivered sermons at the Friday congregations.”

In the *Ta’rīkh* [History] of al-Ḥāfiẓ Taqī ad-Dīn Abu ‘l-Ma‘ālī Muḥammad ibn Rāfi‘ al-Salām, he is listed as:

“Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq al-Jilī al-Muttaḥid al-Baghdādī-al-jadd-wa ‘l-wālid-wa ‘l-mawlid [linked to Baghdād through his grandfather, his father, and his own birth] Abu ‘s-Sa‘ūd ibn Abī Naṣr ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ, commonly known by the epithet *aẓ-Ṣāḥib* [the Supporter (of the Religion)].”

As stated by ash-Sharīf ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Ḥusainī (though not in his *Wafayāt* [Deaths]): “He received traditional instruction from al-Muqri, and became an excellent Imām and preacher.” (Here ends the quotation.)

He went missing on Tuesday, the 27th of the month of Rabi‘ al-Ākhir, in the year [A.H.] 681. According to ash-Sharīf ‘Izz ad-Dīn al-Ḥusainī: “His murdered body was discovered in a well. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!”

• Shaikh ‘Abd as-Salām ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad (d. A.H. 730)

“Shaikh Aḥmad’s brother, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, fathered a son called Shaikh ‘Abd as-Salām ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbalī. He received traditional instruction from his father’s other brother, Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh.

“It was al-Barz who told me: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd as-Salām was a blessed man, handsomely built, endowed with many noble qualities, a member of the house of seniority and dignity. His ambition was far-reaching, and he mingled freely with the ruling class. He made frequent trips to Egypt. He held numerous high-ranking positions, and enjoyed privileged access to the corridors of political power.

“He died in the early morning of Monday the 27th of Jumādā’l-Ūlā, in the year [A.H.] 730, in the foothills of Mount Qāsiyūn. His funeral prayer was performed at noon on that same Monday, in the al-Muẓaffarī congregational mosque [jāmi‘]. He was buried at Qāsiyūn, in the cemetery of Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-Armawī. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!” (Here ends the abbreviated quotation from al-Barz. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!)

I have not been able to ascertain his father’s dates of birth and death of his father, nor those of his paternal uncle, Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh. May Allāh enfold them in His mercy!

• Shaikh Saif ad-Dīn Yaḥyā (d. A.H. 734)

Shaikh Ṣāḥib Abū Sa‘ūd Aḥmad left behind him a son, called Shaikh Saif ad-Dīn Yaḥyā. As we learn from the author of *ar-Rawḍ az-Zāhir* [The Beautiful Gardens]:<sup>117</sup> “In his historical work, entitled *al-I‘lām fī Ta’rīkh al-Islām* [Information Concerning the History of Islām], that highly erudite Imām, al-Ḥujja Abū ‘ṣ-Ṣidq Taqī ad-Dīn ibn Qāḍī Shahīd (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), has informed us:

“As for Yaḥyā Saif ad-Dīn Abū Zakariyyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī ibn ash-Shaikh Ṣāliḥ al-‘Ābid, he was a righteous

<sup>117</sup> See note 113 on p. 182 above.

man, devoted to worshipful service, and a figure of eminent distinction. He was a resident of Ḥamāh [in Syria], and it was there that he died, in the year [A.H.] 734. May Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him!"

According to al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad, widely known as Ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn ad-Dimashqī: "Shaikh Yaḥyā narrated traditional reports on the authority of his father, Abu's-Sa'ūd Aḥmad. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them both!" (Here ends the quotation.)

His son was Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad.

• Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn ibn Yaḥyā

It was al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn ad-Dimashqī who said: "As for [Shams ad-Dīn] Abū 'Abdu'llāh Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, he was a scholarly Shaikh. He received traditional instruction from a number of teachers in Jerusalem [*Bait al-Maqdis*]. He narrated traditional reports on the authority of [his father] Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā." (Here ends this abbreviated quotation.) May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!



## Concerning the children of Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad

### • Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (d. A.H. 787)

In his *Ta’rīkh* [History], to which he added an appendix covering the period after [A.H.] 740, that highly erudite scholar, Abu ‘ṣ-Ṣidq ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), informs the reader:

“As for Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn [Shams ad-Dīn] Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, he set out to perform the Pilgrimage in this year (meaning the year [A.H.] 787). He died in Ḥamāh, in that same year, when he was little more than twenty years of age.”

According to another historian, Imām Taqī ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrizī, in his book entitled *Durar al-‘Uqūd* [Pearls of the Chaplets]:

“He died after his return from the Ḥijāz [the region of Mecca], when he was little more than twenty years of age, in the year [A.H.] 787. He was one of those people who are devoted to religion [*dīn*] and worshipful service [*‘ibāda*]. He attached very little importance to this world, and abstained from its pursuit in a most graceful manner. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!”

### • Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī (d. A.H. 793)

In the appendix to his *Ta’rīkh* [History], that highly erudite scholar, Imām Shaikh al-Islām Abu ‘ṣ-Ṣidq ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), informs the reader:

“As for Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad

ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, he died in Cairo [*al-Qāhira*], on Tuesday the 24th of Jumādā ’l-Ākhira, in the year [A.H.] 793.



## Concerning the children of Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Shams ad-Dīn.

### •Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad

As for Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, he died in Ḥamāh. He was buried in the cemetery of al-Mukhlasiyya, on the eastern outskirts of Ḥamāh. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

### •Shaikh Badr ad-Dīn Ḥasan

“His brother, Shaikh Badr ad-Dīn Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, also died in Ḥamāh. He was buried in the graveyard of his father’s grandfather, Shaikh Saif ad-Dīn Yaḥyā, outside the Waterwheel Gate [*Bāb an-Nā’ūra*], opposite the Qādiriyya convent [*zāwiya*]. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

### •Shaikh Badr ad-Dīn Ḥusain

“As for the third brother, Shaikh Badr ad-Dīn Ḥusain ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, he also died in Ḥamāh. He was buried in the graveyard referred to immediately above, next to his brother and his great-grandfather, Shaikh [Saif ad-Dīn] Yaḥyā (mentioned earlier). May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them all!

## Concerning their offspring (may Allāh multiply their descendants!)

**T**he following are some of the descendants of the previously mentioned Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn:

• Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Shams ad-Dīn

“As for the righteous, ascetic and worshipful Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, he was born in Ḥamāh, and it was there that he lived his life, died, and was buried. He was one of those people who are devoted to goodness, religion and righteousness. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

• Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir

“As for the honorable Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, his surname ‘al-Ḥamawī’ indicates his connection with Ḥamāh, which was the place of his birth, the home of his father and his grandfather, the town in which he spent his life, and the scene of his death. He was worshipfully devout, righteous, and detached from this world and its people. He did not develop a close relationship with anyone.

“I met him on several occasions in Ḥamāh. He died there shortly after the death of Shaikh Qāsim, of whom we shall have more to say in due course. He was buried next to his grandfather, in the cemetery of al-Mukhlasiyya. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

“His mother was that noble and regal lady, the daughter of Shaikh Ḥusain ibn ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī, and the sister of our master, Shaikh Yaḥyā, of whom we shall soon have more to say. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them!

• Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (d. A.H. 733)

“As for the pious and honorable Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥusainī al-Ḥamawī, his surname ‘al-Ḥamawī’ indicates his connection with Ḥamāh, the town in which he was born, lived his life, and died.

“He was righteous and worthy of respect. His physical constitution [*khalq*] was excellent, and so was his moral character [*khulq*]. He was noble in spirit and handsome in appearance. He was distinguished by his refined politeness, humble modesty, cheerful humor, and tolerant forbearance. He was gentle and kind by nature, graceful in company, and wittily amusing. He always wore a smile. He was held in high esteem by the privileged élite, and also by the common people. He was endowed with abundant energy, an effective way of speaking, and a dignified bearing, in his dealings with the rulers and with others.

“He moved to Aleppo [*Ḥalab*], and made his home there for some time. It was there that he married my full sister [*shaqīqa*], and was blessed with children from her womb. Then he returned to Ḥamāh, along with his wife and their two sons, of whom we shall have more to tell, if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills. He held positions of high rank, religious offices and supervisory appointments, in Ḥamāh, Aleppo and Damascus. His legacy is now in the hands of his two sons (may Allāh the Exalted preserve them both).

“He died (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) in Ḥamāh, in the month of Rabī’ al-Ūlā in the year [A.H.] 733, and was buried in the family graveyard outside the Waterwheel Gate [*Bāb an-Nā’ūra*]. He was then over sixty years of age. May Allāh enfold him in His mercy!

• Shaikh Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir

“His brother, Shaikh Yaḥyā ibn ash-Shaikh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, was linked to Ḥamāh through his ancestry and his birth, and it was there that he lived and died. He was transported to Allāh (Exalted is He) before the death of the abovementioned Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn.”



## Concerning the children of Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn.

### • Shaikh Darwīsh Muḥammad (d. A.H. 932)

As for Shaikh Darwīsh Muḥammad ibn Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his native and ancestral connection with Ḥamāh, the town where he was born, spent his life, and died.

He was a skillful genealogist [*nassāb*], graceful and virtuous. He grew in the worshipful service of Allāh (Exalted is He), in the finest manner, as one of those devoted to religion and goodness. He was born in Ḥamāh, and it was there that he died, one year before his father's death. He was buried in the graveyard of al-Kātib [the Writer], his great-grandfather on his mother's side, opposite the Qādiriyya convent [*ḥawīya*]. May Allāh enfold him in His mercy!

### • Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn 'Abdu'llāh (born A.H. 922)

As for the honorable Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn 'Abdu'llāh ibn Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī al-Ḥalabī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his ancestral and residential connection with Ḥamāh, while his surname “al-Ḥalabī” indicates that Aleppo [*Ḥalab*] was his birthplace.

He is a handsome young man, magnanimous in spirit, modest to the point of humility, agreeable in company, chivalrous and gallant, and

graceful by nature. He does not cling to anything belonging to this world, he never disappoints anyone who comes to him in need. He has read the Glorious Qur'ān, and acquired some knowledge of Arabic grammar [*naḥw*] and Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. He traveled to Egypt, Damascus and Aleppo [*Ḥalab*], then returned to Ḥamāh.

He was born in Aleppo [*Ḥalab*] in the year [A.H.] 922. May Allāh preserve him and cause him to live the good life, for the sake of Muḥammad and his family.

• Shaikh 'Afif ad-Dīn Ḥusain (born A.H. 926)

As for his full brother [*shaqīq*], the honorable Shaikh 'Afif ad-Dīn Ḥusain ibn Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yahyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī al-Ḥalabī, his surname "al-Ḥamawī" indicates his ancestral and residential connection with Ḥamāh, while his surname "al-Ḥalabī" indicates that Aleppo [*Ḥalab*] was his birthplace.

He is a piously abstinent young man, devoted to worshipful service. He adheres to the doctrine of the Shāfi'ī school [*madhhab*]. He has studied the Glorious Qur'ān and Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. He has learned the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*] from me, just as I learned it from that highly erudite scholar, our master Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad al-Bārīzī al-Jahnī ash-Shāfi'ī al-Ḥamawī. Our classes were held at the home of his full brother, Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn 'Abdu'llāh (mentioned immediately above), on the outskirts of Ḥamāh, in the quarter I presently inhabit, in the year in which I put this compilation together; that is to say, in the year [A.H.] 950.

Shaikh 'Afif ad-Dīn Ḥusain has many dear friends, followers, willing assistants and pupils. He has effective way of speaking, and he enjoys considerable respect, among the rulers and their subjects alike. He is elegantly refined in his appearance and his style of life, in the way he dresses and the way he eats. He is magnanimous in spirit, dignified and sedate in his bearing, gentle and kind by nature, agreeable in his attributes of character, sharp-witted, eloquent and

charming. He sets a fine example of virtue, modesty, cheerfulness, affability, tolerance, and unruffled composure. Visitors are drawn to him on account of his righteous conduct and the purity of his ancestral house. In the spiritual concert [*samāʿ*], he has an excellent state of calm tranquillity and submissive humility.

He is now one of the leading Shaikhs of the Qādiriyya in Ḥamāh, and his travels have taken him to Egypt, Damascus, Tripoli [in Lebanon], Aleppo, and other places. He can always count on a friendly reception, from the privileged élite and the common people alike.

I was in Damascus when he visited that city, and I saw how enthusiastically he was welcomed by the paupers, the Shaikhs, the judges, the dignitaries and the prominent personalities. He was treated with honor and hospitality, and received a constant stream of distinguished visitors. He was invited to an audience with the Viceroy [*Nāʾib as-saltāna*], the Commander-in-Chief [*Amīr al-umarāʾ*] ʿĪsā Pasha ibn Ibrāhīm Pasha, who accorded him a fine reception, and treated him with an extraordinary degree of honor and respect. I was present at that session. One of the things the Viceroy said to him, and to his brother, Shaikh ʿAbduʾllāh, was: “May Allāh multiply your offspring!” The Chief Justice of Damascus echoed these words.

While he was in Damascus, Shaikh ʿAfif ad-Dīn invested certain people with the tattered cloak [*khirqā*] of the Qādiriyya. Every Friday, after the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], he would conduct the circle of remembrance [*ḥalqat adh-dhikr*] in the Umayyad congregational mosque [*al-jāmiʿ al-Umawī*], to the east of the section reserved for the ruler. Many people attended, including scholars, Shaikhs and muftis [official expounders of Islāmic law]. Allāh implanted love for him in people’s hearts, through the blessed grace of his pure ancestry.

The date of his arrival in Damascus was Thursday the twenty-sixth of Shaʿbān, in the year [A.H.] 948. He was accompanied by his loyal full brother [*shaqīq*], ʿAbduʾllāh, whom we have mentioned above. The two of them stayed together in Damascus, until they departed from that city on Sunday the 5th of Shawwāl, in the year just mentioned. The scholars, the judges, the paupers and the Shaikhs

came out to bid them farewell, escorting them as far as al-Qābūn al-Fawqānī. It was indeed a memorable day.

He was born (may Allāh cause him to live the good life!) in Aleppo [Ḥalab], in the month of Rajab of the year [A.H.] 926. May Allāh (Exalted is He) preserve him, and may He employ him in good service!



## Concerning the offspring of Shaikh Ḥasan.

### •Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan

One of Shaikh Ḥasan's offspring was his son, the righteous, ascetic and worshipful Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī. His surname "al-Ḥamawī" indicates that Ḥamāh was his birthplace, as well as the home of his father and grandfather.

He was a righteous and ascetic Shaikh, devoted to worshipful service. He died in Ḥamāh, and was buried in the family graveyard, next to his father and his grandfathers, outside the Waterwheel Gate [*Bāb an-Nā'ūra*]. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

### •Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan

As for the brother of Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn, the honorable Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, his surname "al-Ḥamawī" indicates that he was born in Ḥamāh, and that he lived and died there.

He was a good Shaikh, righteous and devout, from the house of goodness and righteousness. He died in Ḥamāh, and was buried in the graveyard of his father and grandfathers, outside the Waterwheel Gate [*Bāb an-Nā'ūra*]. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them all!

## Concerning the children of Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn and Shaikh Aḥmad.

- Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Shams ad-Dīn (d. A.H. 901)

**A**s for the honorable Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates that Ḥamāh was his birthplace, and that he lived and died there.

He was the principal Shaikh of the Qādiriyya, and the Shaikh of Shaikhs in Ḥamāh and all the other towns of Syria. He was a righteous person, and his word carried weight with the rulers, the privileged élite, and the common people. His physical constitution [*khalq*] was excellent, and so was his moral character [*khulq*]. He set a fine example of dignity, sedateness, calm composure, knowledge, virtue, and noble generosity. He did not become attached to anything. If a thousand dinārs [gold coins] came his way, he would not keep them in his possession, not even till the following day. He would never turn a beggar away empty-handed, even if all he could give him was one of his only pair of shirts.

He had many willing assistants, and a host of followers and pupils. He always kept track of his companions, and asked about them when they were absent. He made frequent journeys to Aleppo, Damascus, and Tripoli [in Lebanon]. In all the towns and cities, he was highly regarded by the government officials and members of the ruling class, who honored him and obeyed his command. Whenever he was presented with a gift, he would distribute it among the people in attendance, and compensate the donor for his gift.

His table-mat was never stowed away, and there was seldom a day when it had no guests to serve. He was the object of visits from all

the towns and countries, and the people held him in high esteem, on account of his own righteous conduct and the righteousness of his pure ancestral house. He was elegant, gracious, amusing, sagacious, and modest to the point of humility.

He invested certain people with the noble tattered cloak [*khirqā*] of the Qādiriyya, among them being my master, my own father, the Chief Justice [*Qāḍī 'l-Qudāt*] Niẓām ad-Dīn Abu 'l-Makārim Yaḥyā at-Tādifi al-Ḥanbalī, the Judge of Aleppo, the son of its Judge, the brother of its Judge, and the son of the daughter of its Judge. Other recipients included my father's two full brothers (my paternal uncles, in other words): the Chief Justice Kamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad at-Tādifi ash-Shāfi'ī, in Aleppo, and the erudite scholar al-Burhānī Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm at-Tādifi al-Ḥanafī. Allāh has graciously allowed me to benefit from these people during their lifetime. Another recipient was my grandfather on my father's side, the Chief Justice Jamāl ad-Dīn Yūsuf at-Tādifi al-Ḥanbalī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him).

Shaikh 'Abd ar-Razzāq died in Ḥamāh, on the 6th of the good month of Ṣafar in the year [A.H.] 901, He was buried in the tomb of his grandfather, Shaikh Ḥasan. He did not leave any children to succeed him. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

•Shaikh 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Aḥmad (d. ca. A.H. 903)

As for the righteous, ascetic and honorable Shaikh 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, his surname "al-Ḥamawī" indicates that Ḥamāh was his birthplace, and that he lived and died there.

He became the principal Shaikh of the Qādiriyya in Ḥamāh. He traveled to Cairo, and settled there for certain period of time. Then he returned to Ḥamāh, where he stayed till he died, about two years after the death of his paternal cousin, Shaikh 'Abd ar-Razzāq. He was buried in the family graveyard, outside the Waterwheel Gate [*Bāb an-Nā'ūra*].

His only children were two daughters, both of whom were still alive at the time of his death. He was an elegant and charming person, noted for his fine calligraphy. May Allāh enfold him in His mercy!

• Shaikh Abu 'n-Najā ibn Aḥmad (d. A.H. 910)

As for Shaikh 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ's brother, the righteous Shaikh Abu 'n-Najā ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, he also died in Ḥamāh.

His death was caused by drowning in the River 'Āsī, in the year [A.H.] 910, prior to the death of Shaikh Qāsim, of whom we shall have more to relate. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them both!



## Concerning the descendants of Shaikh Ḥusain ibn ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn.

### • Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain

As for Shaikh Ḥusain’s son, the righteous, pious, ascetic and honorable Shaikh Muḥyi’d-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain ibn [‘Alā’ ad-Dīn] ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates that Ḥamāh was his birthplace, and that he lived and died there.

He was the principal Shaikh of the Qādiriyya in Ḥamāh and all the regions of Syria, highly esteemed by the privileged élite and by the common people alike. Though he possessed a considerable fortune, he always behaved in a modest and courteous manner. He was a good friend to the people of knowledge, generous by nature, handsome in physical constitution [*khalq*] and of excellent moral character [*khulq*].

He died in Ḥamāh, and was buried in the family graveyard, outside the Waterwheel Gate [*Bāb an-Nā’ūra*], when he was more than eighty years of age. May Allāh enfold him in His mercy!

### • Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn Qāsim ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain (d. A.H. 916)

As for [Shaikh Ḥusain’s grandson] the righteous, pious and ascetic Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn Qāsim ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain ibn [‘Alā’ ad-Dīn] ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his ancestral connection with Ḥamāh, which was also his birthplace, and the town in which he lived and died.

He was the Shaikh of the leaders and notables of the Qādiriyya in his day and age. The training of all spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*]

became subject to his direction. His physical constitution was excellent, and so was his moral character. In his frequent practice of almsgiving [*ṣadaqa*] and charitable work [*iḥsān*], he operated in private, avoiding all publicity. He never missed an opportunity to engage in reciting the Qur'ān. He was dignified and sedate in his bearing, and his word carried weight with the privileged élite and the common people, with government officials and members of ruling class.

I met him in the year [A.H.] 910, when I accompanied my master, my own father, on an excursion to Ḥamāh. We lodged for a time in his private retreat [*khalwa*], an apartment inside the convent [*zāwiya*]. He took great pains to make us comfortable, and treated us with extremely noble generosity. Through his blessed grace, we experienced all that is good.

He died (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) on the night of Monday the 6th of Rabi' al-Ākhir, in the year [A.H.] 916, when he was just over fifty years of age, and was buried in the family graveyard.



## Concerning the children of Shaikh Qāsim, and his children's children.

- Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim (born A.H. 885)

**A**s for the righteous, pious, good and trustworthy Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain ibn [‘Alā’ ad-Dīn] ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥamawī (his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his ancestral connection with Ḥamāh, where he was born and still resides) al-Ḥasanī ash-Shāfi‘ī, he is our Shaikh, the son of our Shaikh, and our exemplary guide toward Allāh (Exalted is He).

He is humbly submissive and religiously devout, the principal Shaikh of the Qādiriyya in Ḥamāh and elsewhere. He combines a fine appearance and excellent moral qualities with elegance, modesty and calm composure. He is generous in spirit, frequently engaged in charitable work, without public display or self-aggrandizement. He keeps himself detached from people. He is a man of wealth and chivalry. No one who approaches him in need is ever sent away disappointed. Whenever someone comes to visit him, he is sure to feed his visitor, doing all he can to satisfy his needs, and attending to him personally, as was the practice of our righteous predecessors, the rightly guided leaders.

He graciously accepts a gift, and always finds some way to recompense the giver. He does his very best to keep in touch with his companions in their absence, by making inquiries and using all possible means of communication.

According to what has been reported concerning his birth (may Allāh extend his lifetime!), he must have been born in the year [A.H.] 885. May Allāh cause him to live the good life! He is the eldest of his brothers. May Allāh multiply their offspring!

## Concerning the children of Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim (may Allāh multiply their offspring!)

### •Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh (born A.H. 926)

**T**he righteous Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh is handsome in physical constitution [*khalq*] and of excellent moral character [*khulq*], noble and generous, modest to the point of humility, chivalrous and gallant, highly intelligent, cheerful in his outlook, religiously devout, and graciously benevolent. He was born in Ḥamāh in the year [A.H.] 926. He is the eldest of all his surviving brothers.

His mother, now mercifully deceased, was that honorable lady, the daughter of Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (previously mentioned). He is therefore of noble descent on both sides of his family. May Allāh (Exalted is He) keep him safe and well!

### •Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifīn

Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh’s full brother, Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifīn, is a righteous young man. May Allāh cause them to grow and mature in righteousness, and may He protect them from the party of Satan, for the sake of their ancestor, the chieftain of the children of ‘Adnān.



## More of the children of Shaikh Qāsim.

- Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Qāsim (A.H. 886–936)

As for the righteous and prominent Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Qāsim ibn Yahyā ibn Ḥusain ibn [‘Alā’ ad-Dīn] ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yahyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his ancestral connection with Ḥamāh, the town where he was born, lived his life, and died.

He was generous in spirit, handsome in appearance, gentle and kind by nature, elegant in his impressive bearing, wittily amusing, highly esteemed by the privileged élite and the common people alike. He was remarkable for his chivalry and courage. A man among men, he was never daunted by any challenge. He enjoyed prestige and respect among members of the ruling class.

He was the principal Shaikh of the Qādiriyya, and I met him several times in Ḥamāh and Aleppo. When he came to Aleppo on some official business, relating to the supervision of pious endowments [*awqāf*], we lodged him in our house, in the manner to which he was accustomed. We placed ourselves at his service, and at the service of those he brought with him from his hometown. My two masters, my father and my paternal uncle, were active in securing his interests, and the interests of those in his company, until he returned, honored and revered, to his regular abode.

I also met him in Cairo, when he came there en route to the noble Ḥijāz [the region of Mecca]. On that occasion, he was accompanied by his two full brothers, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and Shaikh Abu ‘l-Wafā Muḥammad, concerning both of whom we shall have more to tell, if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills. He was accorded exceptionally attentive and honorable treatment, on the part of those who wielded

power and authority in Cairo, until he set out for the noble Ḥijāz, accompanied by the Egyptian caravan [of Pilgrims]. He returned in due course, safe and sound, to Ḥamāh.

He was born on Thursday the 16th of Ramaḍān, in the year [A.H.] 886, and died in Ḥamāh in the month of Rajab, in the year [A.H.] 936. He was buried in the little garden opposite their family graveyard. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

•Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Qāsim (born A.H. 893)

As for Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Qāsim ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain ibn [‘Alā’ ad-Dīn] ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his connection with Ḥamāh, the town where he was born, and where he still lives.

He is gentle and kind by nature, elegant and gracious in social relations, extremely chivalrous, and generous by inclination. He is fond of the people of knowledge, constantly devoted to worshipful service, and easily moved to tears.

He was born on the night of Thursday, the 4th of the sacred month of Muḥarram, in the year [A.H.] 893. May Allāh (Exalted is He) keep him alive!

•Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad (born A.H. 934)

As for his son,<sup>118</sup> the righteous young Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his ancestral connection with Ḥamāh, his birthplace.

He has studied the Glorious Qur’ān, as well as books on the jurisprudence [*fiqh*] of the Shāfi’ī school, and works on Qur’ānic science. He has learned the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*] from me, just as I learned it from Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad al-Bārīzī al-Jahnī al-Ḥamawī ash-Shāfi’ī.

He was born in Ḥamāh in the month of Muḥarram, the sacred month of Allāh, in the year [A.H.] 934. May Allāh (Exalted is He)

<sup>118</sup> This is presumably the son of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and therefore the grandson of Shaikh Qāsim.

cause him to grow and mature in righteousness, for the sake of Muḥammad and his family!

• Shaikh Barakāt ibn Qāsim (born ca. A.H. 898)

As for the righteous and honorable Shaikh Barakāt ibn Qāsim ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain ibn [‘Alā’ ad-Dīn] ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his connection with Ḥamāh, the town where he was born, and where he still resides.

He is gentle and kind, elegant and gracious, modest to the point of humility, and piously reserved. He bears the mark of righteousness. He does not become attached to anyone. He is constantly devoted to worshipful service, though often in poor health. He is religiously devout and charitable. He is dignified and sedate in his bearing.

I asked his brother, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, if he could tell me when he was born, but he said that he did not know an exact date. He could only tell me that Shaikh Barakāt was his junior by approximately five years. May Allāh (Exalted is He) keep them both alive!

His mother was that leading lady, now mercifully deceased, the daughter of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ (previously mentioned).

• Shaikh Muḥammad Abu ‘l-Wafā ibn Qāsim

As for the righteous and pious Shaikh Muḥammad Abu ‘l-Wafā ibn Qāsim ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusain ibn [‘Alā’ ad-Dīn] ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥamawī, his surname “al-Ḥamawī” indicates his ancestral connection with Ḥamāh, the town where he was born, and where he still resides.

He is active in good works, well versed in religious knowledge, ascetic in his way of life, a narrator of Tradition, and an exemplary guide. He is the principal Shaikh and leader of the Qādiriyya. He is sharp-witted, intelligent, modest to the point of humility, and graciously refined. He has studied the Qur’ān, Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] and the Prophetic Tradition [*Ḥadīth*].

He has traveled to Egypt, Damascus, the Ḥijāz and Aleppo, and received instruction from the Shaikhs. He has many pupils and willing assistants. His bearing is dignified and commands respect. He is held in high esteem by the privileged élite and the common people alike. He is a man among men, undaunted by any kind of problem.

Although he is the youngest of his father's children, he is the most outstanding of them all in worth and exalted stature. May Allāh (Exalted is He) keep him alive, and may He enable us to benefit from him and from his vast knowledge!

☞ A rather puzzling omission. ☞

Down to our own day, as we have noted above, these prominent Shaikhs, descendants of Shaikh 'Alā' ad-Dīn, have been resident in Ḥamāh. May Allāh multiply their offspring! I have examined many diplomas [*ijāzāt*] in their own handwriting, and I have noticed that they omit [from their genealogies] the name of their grandfather's grandfather, Shaikh Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn 'Abd ar-Razzāq. I fail to understand the reason for that omission, especially since not one of the most reliable historians has left out the name of [Shaikh] Muḥammad. As we have mentioned earlier,<sup>119</sup> one historian actually states that he bore a striking resemblance to his great-grandfather, our master Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with them both). This must have escaped their notice, it seems to me, though Allāh is Best Aware of the true fact of the matter.



<sup>119</sup> See p. 196 above.

**Concerning the children and grand-  
children of Shaikh Muḥammad ibn  
‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jīlī al-Jibālī  
(may Allāh enfold them in His mercy).**

- Shaikh Sharshīq ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. A.H. 652)

**A**s for the righteous Shaikh Sharshīq ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Jibālī, his surname “al-Jibālī” indicates that he was born in al-Jibāl.

In the words of al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū ‘Abdī’llāh Muḥammad adh-Dhahabī: “Shaikh Sharshīq died in the year [A.H.] 652, at the age of twenty-four.” (Here ends the quotation.) May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them both!

- Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Akḥal ibn Sharshīq (A.H. 651–739)

As for the righteous and ascetic Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Akḥal ibn Sharshīq ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Jibālī, his surname “al-Jibālī” indicates his ancestral connection with al-Jibāl, the place where he was born, lived his life, and died.

As we are informed by al-Ḥāfiẓ adh-Dhahabī, in the appendix to his *Ta’rīkh* [History], covering the period after [A.H.] 700:

“Concerning the great ascetic Imām, the descendant of the Shaikhs, Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Abu ’l-Karam Muḥammad ibn ash-Shaikh Sharshīq ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Shaikh al-Islām Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir Abī Ṣāliḥ al-Jīlī as-Sinjārī al-Jibālī al-Ḥanbalī:

“He was born in Ramaḍān in the year [A.H.] 651, in the village of al-Jibāl, where the tombs of his forebears are located. He received his

traditional training from al-Fakhr an-Najjār and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad an-Naṣībī, and then, in Mecca, from ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm ibn ar-Rajjāj, and in Medina from al-‘Afif Muzawwi‘. He narrated Tradition in Baghdād and Damascus, and performed the Pilgrimage [Ḥajj] several times.

“He gave traditional instruction to his sons, al-Ḥusām ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, al-Badr Ḥasan, al-‘Izz Ḥusain and aṭ-Ṭuhr, as well as to Shams ad-Dīn ibn Sa’d and others. He was noted for his pious abstinence and his righteous conduct, and he attracted many followers. He enjoyed great eminence and prestige in those parts of the country. Many visitors were drawn to him, on account of his personal grace and the nobility of his ancestral house, and they were received with active hospitality. Humility and benevolence were intrinsic to his character.

“He lived to a ripe old age. When he died, on the 1st of Dhu ’l-Ḥijja in the year [A.H.] 739, he was buried next to his forebears.” (Here ends the abbreviated quotation from adh-Dhahabī.)

As we are informed in the *Ta’rīkh* [History] of another historian, Shaikh al-Imām Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jazarī:

“Saturday the 8th of the month of Ramaḍān, in the year [A.H.] 722, marked the arrival in Damascus of the righteous Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusām ad-Dīn Sharshīq ibn ash-Shaikh as-Sayyid aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad ibn ash-Shaikh Abī Bakr ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ash-Shaikh al-Imām al-Qudwa Abī Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ al-Jilī. He lodged in the Salāriyya convent [*ṣāwīya*], on his way to perform the Pilgrimage [Ḥajj].

“He was born on the night of Friday, in the middle of Ramaḍān in the year [A.H.] 651, in al-Jibāl, a town in one of the regions of Mesopotamia [*Sinjār*]. His father’s grave is situated there, as are the graves of his grandfather and his father’s grandfather. He performed the Pilgrimage [Ḥajj] another time, in the year [A.H.] 684.

The same historian also tells us: “His father was given the name Sharshīq on account of a dream. Sharshīq was also the name of an earlier Shaikh, who was buried in that town.”

As he further informs us: “Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn was born four months before his father’s death. He became famous throughout those regions. His table-mat was always spread, and his sons were

equally hospitable. They were honored and respected by the local rulers and their subjects, who often came to visit them. Many people were invested by them with the tattered cloak [*khirqā*].

“He was treated with honor wherever he went, in Aleppo and Damascus, as well as other towns and cities. He was welcomed by the spiritual paupers [*fuqarā*'] and the Shaikhs, and the most eminent personalities could be found in his company. His visit would always include an audience with the Viceroy [*Nā'ib as-saltāna*]. Many people were invested by him with the tattered cloak [*khirqā*] of the Qādiriyya. He was present in the great congregational mosque [*jāmi'*] of Damascus, on the day when the recital of [the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of] al-Bukhārī was completed. [That authoritative collection of more than seven thousand Prophetic Traditions] was read aloud by Ibn al-Barzālī 'Alī al-Ḥijāzī, while people listened and learned from the recitation.” (Here ends this abbreviated excerpt.)

As we are informed in the *Ta'rikh* [History] of yet another historian, al-Ḥāfiẓ Taqī ad-Dīn Abu 'l-Ma'ālī Muḥammad ibn Rāfi' as-Salāmi:

“Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn received traditional training, based on the *Shamā'il* of at-Tirmidhī, from al-Fakhr 'Alī ibn Aḥmad an-Najjār, and, in Aleppo, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Qādir an-Naṣībī. Together with Shaikh Taqī ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taimiyya and Shaikh 'Alam ad-Dīn al-Qāsim ibn al-Barzālī, he narrated the Traditions [*Aḥādīth*] expounded by al-Ḥāfiẓ aḍ-Ḍiyā' Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid. That was in Damascus, the Protected City [*al-Maḥrūsa*]. He also narrated in Baghdād, where Ibn al-Marzūqī and ibn as-Sīrajī were among his attentive students.

“His physical constitution [*khalq*] was excellent, and so was his moral character [*khulq*]. He was gracious, piously abstinent, and devoted to worshipful service. He was one of those who faithfully follow the Sunna [the exemplary practice of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace)]. He inspired affection and profound respect, for he was both altruistic and distinguished, and people considered him exceptionally worthy of their trust.” (Here ends the quotation.)

This next account is taken from the historical work entitled *ad-Durar* [The Pearls], by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Imām al-'Allāma Shaikh al-Islām Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī:

“[Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn] Abu ’l-Karam learned the Qur’ān by heart, studied Islāmic jurisprudence, and received traditional instruction, in Damascus, from al-Fakhr ‘Alī ibn an-Najjār and others scholars. He became a narrator of Tradition in Damascus, Baghdād and al-Jibāl. He was renowned for his righteous conduct, his devotion to worshipful service, and his magnanimity. Not once, in the whole of his life, did the palm of his hand touch gold or silver. He combined extreme generosity with modest shyness. He treated people with benevolence and affection. He and the people of his house were well known for their dedication to Islām and the Muslims.”

(I may have quoted that from *ar-Rawḍ az-Zāhir* [The Beautiful Gardens].<sup>120</sup> Allāh knows best!)

• Shaikh al-Badr Ḥasan ibn Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad (d. A.H. 775)

Concerning Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn’s son, al-Badr Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Sharshīq ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir Abī Šāliḥ al-Jilī al-Jibālī, the following information is supplied by al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad ibn Rāfi‘ in his *Mu‘jam* [Alphabetic Encyclopedia]:

“As for al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Sharshīq ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ash-Shaikh Abī Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Šāliḥ ‘Abdī’llāh ibn Jangādost al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, he received traditional instruction from his father, and went to live in Baghdād.

“He traveled toward us in Damascus, on his way to perform the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*] in the year [A.H.] 741. He lodged in the Salāriyya convent [*zāwiya*], outside the city, and then went on to perform the Pilgrimage. On his return journey, he lodged in that same place, and I met with him there. He was dignified and sedate in his bearing, excellent in both his physical constitution [*khalq*] and his moral character [*khulq*], generous in spirit, and handsome in appearance. He awarded me a diploma, authorizing me to transmit those elements of the Tradition [*Ḥadīth*] that he narrated.” (Here ends the quotation.)

According to al-Imām al-Ḥujja Ibn Ḥajar, in his book entitled *Abnā’ al-Ghamr fī Abnā’ al-‘Amr* [The Sons of Liberality, concerning the Sons of Longevity]:

<sup>120</sup> See note 113 on p. 182 above.

“He enjoyed respect and reverence in those cities and towns. He died in the year [A.H.] 775, at a very advanced age. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!”

•Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī (A.H. 784 or 785–853)

Concerning the righteous Shaikh ‘Alā ad-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Nūr ad-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Akḥal ibn Ḥusām ad-Dīn Sharshīq ibn Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ash-Shaikh Abī Bakr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Shaikh al-Islām Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī al-Ḥasanī al-Jibālī:

He and his children (of whom we shall have more to relate) took up residence in Egypt, after the occupation of Cairo by king Ashraf Barsbāy, and his return from Āmid [Diarbekir in Mesopotamia].

As we are informed by the author of *ar-Rawḍ az-Zāhir* [The Beautiful Gardens]: “Our own Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn, was excellent in both his physical constitution [*khalq*] and his moral character [*khulq*], and his bearing was dignified and sedate. If anyone failed to keep a promise he had made to him, and then came to apologize for his omission, the Shaikh would almost invariably respond with a magnanimous gesture, saying: ‘May Allāh treat him—and us—with forbearance! *Āmīn*.’

“In his day and age, he was the preeminent leader of the Qādiriyya in all the regions of Egypt. He twice performed the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*].

“According to what I was told by his mother, the noble lady Fāṭima, daughter of Shaikh Ḥaidar, he was born in the year [A.H.] 784 or 785. Allāh (Glory be to Him) knows best. His death as a martyr [*shahīd*] resulted from the plague, in the daytime of Thursday, when the sun was at the point of noon, on the 10th of the good month of Ṣafar in the year [A.H.] 853. His funeral service was performed at the Qarāfa Gate in Cairo, and he was buried there, in the cemetery known as the graveyard of Sīdī ‘Adī ibn Musāfir.

“Several of his children were buried in that same cemetery, which is also the graveyard of his paternal cousin, Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Nūr ad-Dīn ‘Alī ibn ‘Izz ad-Dīn Ḥusain ibn Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Akḥal ibn Sharshīq, and of the latter’s two sons, Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn Mūsā and Shaikh Badr ad-Dīn.

## The plague takes a heavy toll.

The death of Shaikh Muḥammad [ibn Nūr ad-Dīn] occurred on the 4th of Ṣafar in the year [A.H.] 840, and his two sons died of the plague—and therefore as martyrs [*shahīdāin*—in the following year. Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn was survived by two sons, and Shaikh Badr ad-Dīn by one daughter.

“As a consequence of the plague, which struck in the year [A.H.] 841, our master Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn was left with only one son, so he took him on a journey to the Ḥijāz. The son fell victim to the plague along the way, before they reached Mount Sinai [*aṭ-Ṭūr*]. He died before they entered the nearby town, and was buried in its congregational mosque [*jāmi’*]. His grave has become a site of pious visitation, where solemn vows are made on his behalf. He was under twenty years of age at the time of his death.

“Several more children were born to Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn after that, and some of them survived him. When he died (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), he left two sons and two daughters. One of the sons died soon after his father, but the other three children are still alive.

• Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (d. A.H. 841)

“Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn’s full brother, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, died of the plague in Damascus, in the year [A.H.] 841, and was buried in the graveyard of the Ṣūfī community. He left no children to succeed him.

“Like his brother, he had moved to Syria after the return of Ashraf Barsbāy from Āmid [Diarbekir in Mesopotamia], on the 19th of Muḥarram, the first month of the year [A.H.] 836.

“He was two years younger than his brother, according to what I was told by their mother, the noble lady Faṭīma.” (Here ends the abbreviated quotation from the author of *ar-Rawḍ az-Zāhir* [The Beautiful Gardens].)

• Shaikh Ḥusām ad-Dīn

Of the descendants of the aforementioned Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, some of the most distinguished have lived in al-Jibāl to this present day, including Shaikh Ḥusām ad-Dīn, who is noble and generous in spirit, and endowed with excellent attributes of character. He and his close relatives enjoy abundant respect in all those towns and regions. He is remarkable for his hospitality, his wealth, and his dignified stature. He owns villages, agricultural estates, financial assets, and an arsenal of weapons [*shawka*]. He has many assistants in his employ. The provincial rulers hold him in high esteem and treat him with honor, as do their subjects.

Shaikh Ḥusām ad-Dīn and his close relatives have invested many people with the tattered robe [*khirqā*] of the Qādiriyya. May Allāh keep them alive, and may He grant us the benefit of their gracious blessings, as well as the gracious blessings of their pure ancestors, in this world and the Hereafter.



## Descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in the village of Yā‘ū, in the region of Aleppo.

**D**own to the present day, the village of Yā‘ū, in the region of Aleppo [*Ḥalab*], has been home to a numerous community of the descendants of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. They are known in those parts as “the Children of Shaikh Ya‘ū.” They maintain a convent [*zāwiya*], provide generous hospitality, and enjoy the respect of the people. They observe an honorable code of conduct, and are held in high esteem by the privileged élite and the common folk alike. They claim descent from Shaikh ‘Īsā,<sup>121</sup> the son of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

### • Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz

Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was endowed with an excellent character. He was noble and generous in spirit, and friendly and cheerful by disposition. He formed no attachment to anything belonging to this world. He was wittily amusing, a man among men. He died in the village of Yā‘ū, and there he was buried, next to his father and his grandfathers.

### • Shaikh Aḥmad

Shaikh Aḥmad, the brother of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, is devoutly religious, benevolent, humble, gracious, generous in spirit, endowed with an excellent character, and friendly by disposition. He is living to this day in the village of Yā‘ū.

<sup>121</sup> See p. 177 above.

• Shaikh ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz

Shaikh ‘Uthmān, the son of the abovementioned Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, was endowed with an excellent character. He was modest to the point of humility, and kept himself detached from people. He lived with his paternal uncle, Aḥmad, in the village of Yā‘ū, until he was taken unto the mercy of Allāh (Exalted is He).

• Shaikh Mūsā

Shaikh Mūsā was handsome in appearance, endowed with an excellent character, elegant and distinguished in his demeanor, and highly respected by all the people. He was taken unto the mercy of Allāh (Exalted is He) before the death of Shaikh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

• Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Mūsā

Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, the son of Shaikh Mūsā, was graceful, handsome, humble, dignified and sedate. Like Shaikh Mūsā, he predeceased his own father. He was buried in the village of Yā‘ū, next to his father and his grandfathers. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them!

• Shaikh Zain ad-Dīn ‘Umar

Shaikh Zain ad-Dīn ‘Umar was a person of outstanding merit. He was noted for his fine calligraphy. He enjoyed abundant respect, and his word carried weight with the ruling classes. In Aleppo and Damascus, he was charged with the sealing of official documents [*tawqī’*] in the presence of the Viceroys [*Nuwwāb as-salṭana*]. He died in Damascus, and was buried in that city.

• Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir and Sayyid Aḥmad

Several of Shaikh Zain ad-Dīn’s children are living in Damascus to this day, while two of them are in Cairo. One of these two brothers is called Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir, and Sayyid Aḥmad is the name of the other. ‘Abd al-Qādir was put in charge of the guild of the nobles [*niqābat al-ashrāf*] in Cairo, and appointed to supervise their pious endowments [*awqāf*]. His still living in that city.

## Descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Cairo.

**D**own to the present day, the city of Cairo [*al-Qāhira*] has also been home to a numerous community of the descendants of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (may Allāh be well pleased with him). They maintain the convent [*zāwiya*] in al-Qarāfa, formerly associated with the name of Sīdī ‘Adī ibn al-Musāfir, but nowadays with that of the Qādiriyya.

I do not know whether they are, in fact, the direct descendants of Shaikh ‘Īsā, the son of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, who died in Cairo—as stated by al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥibb ad-Dīn an-Najjār in his *Ta’rīkh* [History]—or whether they represent some of the progeny of ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī, who was one of the descendants of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jibālī, and who settled in Egypt after its occupation by al-Ashraf [Barsbāy], following his return from Āmid [in Mesopotamia] in the year [A.H.] 836. ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī was accompanied by his children, and he died in Egypt, as we have previously explained.<sup>122</sup> May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!

They own property in Cairo, where they hold positions of authority and financial assets, and they attract a constant stream of visitors. May Allāh employ them in good service!



<sup>122</sup> See p. 226 above.

## Descendants of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in Baghdād.

**B**aghdād, the residence of our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, is also home to a large community of people who claim to be his descendants (may Allāh be well pleased with him). They enjoy dignified status and respect, in the sight of the privileged élite and the common folk alike. They hold property and financial assets, which they administer on behalf of the paupers [*fuqarā’*] and the frequent visitors to the convent [*zāwiya*].



## Shāh Ismā‘īl destroys the convent [zāwiya] in Baghdād.

When Shāh Ismā‘īl, the Sultān of the Persians, seized control of Baghdād, he destroyed the convent [zāwiya] and dissolved their unity. They dispersed into various regions, and one group fled to Aleppo, where we lodged them in our house. There were several eminent figures among them, including the most distinguished Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Alī, his children, his two brothers, Muḥyi ’d-Dīn and Zain al-‘Ābidīn, and their nephew, Shaikh Yūsuf.

They stayed with us for some time, before setting out on the journey to Cairo, where they were graciously treated by the ruler, king Ashraf Abu ’n-Naṣr Qānsūh al-Ghūrī (may Allāh enfold him in His mercy, and cause him to dwell in His Garden of Paradise). The king put Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn in charge of the Yarbaqiyya convent [zāwiya] on the outskirts of Aleppo, and entrusted him with the supervision of several others.

Shaikh ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn died in Aleppo, after returning there from Cairo. His children also died there; not one of them is still alive. As for his nephew, Shaikh Yūsuf, he stayed in Cairo, together with his paternal uncle, Zain al-‘Ābidīn. The king also bestowed his favor upon Shaikh Yūsuf. He put him in charge of the convent [zāwiya] founded by his grandfather’s deputy [nā’ib], which is situated in the vicinity of the Old City of Cairo [*Miṣr al-qadīma*], on the bank of the River Nile.

He stayed there until the country came under the rule of the fortunate martyr [*shahīd*], Sultān Salīm Khān ibn ‘Uthmān, the Sultān of the Arabs, the Persians and the Byzantines [*ar-Rūm*].—May Allāh enfold him in His mercy, and establish the rule of his son, Sultān Sulaimān Khān, upon firm foundations, and perpetuate his dynasty, for the sake of Muḥammad and his family!—in the early part

of the year [A.H.] 923. Shaikh Yūsuf then departed from Cairo, returning to Aleppo for reasons too complicated to explain at this point. He later moved to Damascus, and it was there that he died. May Allāh (Exalted is He) bestow His mercy upon him!

As for his paternal uncle, Zain al-ʿĀbidīn, he died in Egypt, before the death of Yūsuf. [Out of that group of refugees from Baghdād] not one of them is still alive in Syria and Egypt.

☞ Sultān Sulaimān orders the rebuilding of the convent [zāwiya] in Baghdād. ☞

When our master, Sultān Sulaimān, gained control of Baghdād—May Allāh perpetuate his reign, and firmly establish the foundations of his noble dynasty, for the sake of Muḥammad and his family!—he ordered the reconstruction of the convent [zāwiya] of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). The building was thus restored, and to it returned the brothers of the aforementioned Shaikh ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn, along with other close relatives of his. They are still there at the present day, and their situation is just as it was in former times, in terms of financial assets, pious endowments [awqāf], and other resources. They are held in high esteem by the privileged élite and the common folk alike.

I met one of their number in the city of Constantinople [Qusṭanṭīniyya], in the year [A.H.] 946. His name is Shaikh Zain ad-Dīn. He is a man of handsome build, dignified and sedate in his demeanor, calm and serene in his composure. He told me that he is one of the children of the paternal uncle of the aforementioned Shaikh ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn, and that he had come to Constantinople on some business involving the pious endowments [awqāf] of the convent [zāwiya] in Baghdād. He had achieved extremely good results, he told me. Each of his scheduled tasks had been successfully accomplished, and much more besides, all through the blessed grace of his ancestor, Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

According to some, the abovementioned Shaikhs—the ones who settled in Baghdād—were not in the male line of descent [from Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir]. They were descendants Shaikh aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī,

from the daughter of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, whom he gave in marriage to the son of Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq at-Ṭafsūnjī, after the death of his father. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

As we are informed by that erudite scholar, Ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Muḥaddith [the Traditionist]: “One of those directly descended from Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is Tāj ad-Dīn Abu ‘l-Faṭḥ Naṣru’llāh ibn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.”

In the words of one of my historical sources of information: “A certain man claimed to be a direct descendant of my master, ‘Abd al-Qādir. Then I met with several people from ‘Irāq and elsewhere, who told me that he is known as Ibn Samīn, and that he is actually one of the pupils of some of the Shaikh’s descendants.” (Here ends this abbreviated quotation. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon my informant.)

I have now presented all the information currently at my disposal, concerning the children of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, his children’s children, and his subsequent offspring. May Allāh be well pleased with them all! They are highly honored and esteemed, in all the cities, towns and regions, by the privileged élite and the common folk alike.



## Dreadful consequences invariably suffered by those who have tried to injure the offspring of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

**N**o one has ever said bad things about them, without meeting the consequence within himself and his own offspring, in the quickest and shortest time. I have witnessed this in our own day and age, for there was a Viceroy [*Nā’ib*] in Ḥamāh, a man called Naṣūḥ, who spoke badly of the aforementioned Shaikh Qāsim (now mercifully deceased). This brought extreme suffering upon him, for it was not long before Allāh disrupted his whole situation, and severed his line of descent. Not one of his offspring has survived.

According to one reporter: “Ibn Yūnus, the Vizier of an-Nāṣir-li-Dīni’llāh, did all he could to injure Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s offspring in Baghdād. He disrupted their lives, inflicted every kind of abomination upon them, and eventually banished them to Wāsiṭ. Allāh then disrupted his whole state of being, ripping it apart and shredding it to bits, and he died a most ugly death, through the blessed grace of their pure ancestry.”

☞ A critic of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is suddenly transformed. ☞

It was Shaikh Abu ‘l-Baqā al-‘Akbarī who said: “I happened to be passing by, one day, while our master Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was holding his regular public session [*majlis*]. I had never met him, nor had I heard him speak, so I said to myself: ‘Let me attend this session, and hear the speech of this barbarian [*‘ajamī*]!’

“When I entered the schoolhouse, I found him holding forth, but he interrupted his speech and said: ‘O blind of eye and heart, what

do you make of the speech of this barbarian?" I simply could not restrain myself from climbing the steps toward him, up there on the lectern. I bared my head, and begged him to invest me with the tattered cloak [*khirqā*]. He did as I asked, and he said to me: 'O 'Abdu'llāh [Servant of Allāh], if Allāh (Exalted is He) had not made me aware of the outcome of your state, your sins would have brought you to perdition. Enter into our guardianship, for you have now become one of us!'

"May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!"

☞ Under Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's gaze, a servant falls dead and a jug points itself toward the *Qibla*. ☞

Shaikh Abū 'Abdi'llāh al-Qazwīnī and Shaikh Aḥmad Najw have told us: "When the business of our master, Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), became widely known in all the lands, three men from among the Shaikhs of Jilān set out to pay him a visit. As soon as they arrived in Baghdād, they came to the schoolhouse and requested an interview with him. They found him sitting with a book in his hand, and they noticed that his jug of water was pointed away from the *Qibla* [direction of the Ka'ba in Mecca], even though his servant was standing right in front of him. They looked at one another, exchanging glances of disapproval over the placing of the jug, and the negligence of the servant in the matter.

"The Shaikh set the book aside, looked at the visitors, and gave the servant a glance. The servant fell dead on the spot. Then he stared at the jug, and it turned by itself, till its spout was pointing toward the *Qibla*.

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ 'Abd al-Qādir explains how he acquired the name Muḥyi 'd-Dīn [Reviver of the Religion].

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked how he came to be called Muḥyi 'd-Dīn [Reviver of the Religion]. He explained: "Once, on a Friday in the year [A.H.] 511, I had just

returned to Baghdād from one of my wanderings, and my feet were bare. I passed by an invalid, whose complexion had altered, and whose body was wasted. He said to me: 'Peace be upon you [*as-salāmu 'alaik*], O 'Abd al-Qādir!' so I saluted him in turn with the greeting of peace. 'Come close to me,' he said, so I went and stood close beside him. 'Help me to sit down,' said he, so I helped him to sit down. His body immediately became robust, his whole condition improved, and his complexion cleared.

"I felt afraid of him, but he said: 'Do you know who I am?' When I replied: 'O Allāh, I do not!' he said: 'I am the Religion [*ana 'd-Dīn*]. I had already died and been forgotten, but then, through you, Allāh (Exalted is He) restored me to life after my death.' I left him there, and went off toward the congregational mosque [*jāmi'*]. A man then approached me, laid his sandals at my feet, and said: 'O my master, Muḥyi 'd-Dīn!' When I was about to perform the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], the people came rushing up to me, kissing my hand and saying: 'O Muḥyi 'd-Dīn!' I had never been called by that name before."

May Allāh be well pleased with him!

☞ In a dream, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir sees himself as a baby in the lap of 'Ā'isha, the Mother of the Believers [*Umm al-Mu'minīn*]. ☞

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: "In my dream, I seemed to be nestled in the lap of 'Ā'isha, the Mother of the Believers [*Umm al-Mu'minīn*] (may Allāh be well pleased with her). I saw myself as a baby, sucking her right breast. Then she brought out her left breast, so I sucked it in turn. When Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) came into the room, he said: 'O 'Ā'isha, this really is our son!'"

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir explains the spiritual value of hunger. ☞

It was Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Jawnī who said: "I entered the presence of my master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, one day when I was in dire need, and my family had eaten nothing for several days. I saluted

him with the greeting of peace, and he greeted me in return. 'O Jawnī,' he then said to me, 'hunger is one of the treasures of the Lord of Truth. He grants it to none but those He loves. When the servant has eaten nothing for three whole days, Allāh (Exalted is He) says to him: "O My servant, you have endured with patience for the sake of My Countenance, My Might and My Majesty, so I will surely feed you and quench your thirst, morsel by morsel and sip by sip."' "

"I was on the verge of crying out loud, but the Shaikh beckoned to me to stay quiet. Then he said: 'If the Lord of Truth inflicts a trial on His servant, and the servant keeps it hidden from view, he becomes entitled to two rewards. If he talks about it, on the other hand, he is only entitled to one reward.' Then he said: 'Come close to me,' so I moved near to him, and he handed me an item of worldly value, in strict confidence. I was about to express my feeling in words, but he said: 'O Jawnī, concealment is more in keeping with spiritual poverty, and more appropriate!'"

### ☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir comes to the rescue of a neighbor addicted to gambling. ☞

As we are told by ash-Sharīf al-Baghdādī: "Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir had a next-door neighbor, a man called 'Abdu'llāh ibn Nuqṭa, who used to play backgammon [*nard*]. He gambled till his opponents had him completely beaten. They took everything he possessed, including his house, so he said: 'Play one more round, and I will stake my physical hand. If I lose, you can cut it off.' They beat him, so they said: 'Stretch out your hand!' When he saw the knife, however, he refused. 'Very well,' they said to him, 'just admit that you are beaten.' He refused their offer, so they said again: 'Stretch out your hand!'

"It was then that Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir climbed up onto the roof of the house. 'O 'Abdu'llāh,' he cried, 'take this prayer rug [*sajjāda*], and use it to bet against them! Do not say: "I am in a twist [*quṭibt*]" (meaning "I am beaten" [*ghulibt*])!' The Shaikh then returned to the company of the spiritual paupers [*fuqarā'*], who noticed that he was weeping. When they asked him to explain, he said: 'You will soon see why!'

“‘Abdu’llāh took the prayer rug, and played another round. He won back all that he had lost, including the house. Then he came to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and repented at his hand. From that time on, he spent all his money on charitable causes. He had a daily income of two hundred *dinārs* [gold coins], and he spent it all on charity. He was in the habit of shaking the tablecloth, while saying: ‘In your honor, O mouse!’

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir said about him: ‘Ibn Nuqṭa came after all the rest. He has tied his camel among their camels, and he is one of the special few. May Allāh be well pleased with him!’” (This Ibn Nuqṭa is the same as the one already mentioned.)

☞ Even Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s tongue  
is sometimes tied. ☞

Abu ‘r-Riḍā, the personal servant of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has told us:

“My master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), performed three exercises in solitary isolation. When he emerged from the third retreat [*khalwa*], I asked him what he had experienced during his period of seclusion. He turned and gave me a look of annoyance, then he uttered these poetic verses:

The Beloved revealed Himself to me from the darkness of the veils,  
so I witnessed things too marvelous for mere words to describe.

The universe was radiant with the light of His countenance,  
and I feared that my fate would be sealed by the awe He inspired.

I called to Him in secret, in honor of His majesty and glory,  
and I did not seek the vision of Him, for fear of stern rebuke;

Except that I did beseech Him: ‘Grant just a single glimpse,  
for You will thereby revive the dead of heart and inner core.

Take pity on one for whom You are his ultimate aspiration,  
for Your meaning is in my sight, and Your memory is in my heart.’

“I fell down in a faint, but then, as soon as I got up, the Shaikh hugged me to him, and said: ‘If only I had permission to relate those marvelous experiences! As it is, the tongue is incapable of expression, and the heart of indication.’”

☞ The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) appears to a young man in his dream, and guides him and his father to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

It was Shaikh Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān who said: “In my dream, I saw that the River ‘Isā had turned into blood and pus, and that its fishes had turned into snakes and vermin. It was swelling, and I was running away from it, afraid that something from it might catch up with me. I ran and ran, till I finally reached my house. A man then handed me a fan [*mirwaḥa*], from inside the house, and he told me: ‘Hold on to this with a very tight grip!’ I said: ‘It will not carry me!’ but he said: ‘Your faith [*īmān*] will carry you. Grab hold of the fan by the tip!’ I grabbed hold of it, and suddenly found myself beside the man, on top of his elevated couch in my own house.

“My feelings had now become calm, so I said to him: ‘By the One who has granted me the favor of your help, who are you?’ When he replied: ‘I am your Prophet, Muḥammad,’ I trembled in awe of him (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and I said: ‘O my dear friend! O Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless you and give you peace! Offer a prayer of supplication to Allāh (Exalted is He) on my behalf, that I may die in accordance with the Book and the Sunna!’ ‘Yes indeed,’ said he (Allāh bless him and give him peace), ‘by your Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).’

“‘O Messenger of Allāh,’ I said again, ‘offer a prayer of supplication to Allāh (Exalted is He) on my behalf, that I may die in accordance with His Book and your Sunna!’ ‘Yes indeed,’ said he (Allāh bless him and give him peace), ‘by your Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).’

“Once again I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh, offer a prayer of supplication to Allāh (Exalted is He) on my behalf, that I may die in accordance with His Book and your Sunna!’ ‘Yes indeed,’ said he (Allāh bless him and give him peace), ‘by your Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).’

“My dream ended at that point, and I woke up from my sleep. I related the vision to my father, and we set out to visit Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). On that particular day, the Shaikh was delivering a speech in the guesthouse [*ribāṭ*], so

we arrived while he was speaking. We could not find a space in which to sit close to him, due to the number of people present, so we sat among those at the back.

“As we were taking our seats, the Shaikh interrupted his speech, and invited us to come forward. We were carried over the necks of the people in the audience, until we were brought to the foot of the lectern. My father climbed up, and I followed behind him. ‘O you idiot,’ the Shaikh said to my father, ‘you would not come to us without a guide!’ He then invested my father with his shirt, and transferred his white cotton skullcap [*tāqiyya*] from his own head to mine.

“When we rejoined the people sitting in the audience, my father noticed that his shirt was back-to-front. He tried to adjust it, but he was told: “Wait until the people have dispersed.” As soon as the Shaikh had stepped down from the lectern, my father was ready to make the adjustment, but lo and behold, the shirt was already the right way round, instead of back-to-front! This discovery caused my father to swoon, to the consternation of the people nearby, so the Shaikh said: ‘Bring him to me!’

“On entering his presence, we found him in the dome of the saints [*qubbat al-awliyāʾ*], that being the dome of the guesthouse. It acquired that appellation because it was the place where the Shaikh received frequent visits from the saints and the men of the Unseen [*rijāl al-Ḡhaib*]. The Shaikh said to my father: ‘If someone has Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) as his guide, and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) as his Shaikh, how can he not be treated with honor? This is a token of honor for you.’ Then he sent for pen and ink and a sheet of parchment, and recorded for us in writing that he had invested us with his tattered cloak [*khirqā*].

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is not one to be deceived, as a camel driver finds out. ☞

In his book, Abū Bakr al-Qīmī tells the reader: “Abū Bakr al-‘Umarī ad-Daqqāq related the following story to me:

“At the start of my career, I worked as a camel driver [*jammāl*] on the route to Mecca. As it once happened, a man from Jilān was traveling with me, on the way to perform the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*], when he felt the presence of death. ‘O camel driver,’ he said to me, ‘take this tattered cloak [*khirqā*], which has ten *dinārs* [gold coins] inside it. Hand the money over, along with this garment, to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, and tell him to beg Allāh to bestow His mercy upon me.’ Then he died.

“When I arrived in Baghdād, I was tempted to keep those items, since no one knew what had transpired between me and that Jilānī, apart from Allāh (Exalted is He). One day, while I was out walking in the city, whom should I encounter but Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir? I promptly saluted him with the greeting of peace [*salām*], and offered him a handshake. He squeezed my hand in a very tight grip, and said: ‘O miserable wretch! For the sake of ten *dinārs* you have betrayed Allāh, betrayed the trust of that Persian, and distanced yourself from me!’ I collapsed in a fainting fit, and the Shaikh went on his way. As soon as I had regained consciousness, I set off toward his house. I took the gold and the garment with me, and delivered them to him.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir acknowledges his own son, ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, as one of those who are ablaze—quite literally—with the ardor of longing for the Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). ☞

It was al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Zar‘a Ḥāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥāhir al-Maqdisī ad-Dārī who said: “I once attended the public session [*majlis*] held by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and I heard him say:

“This speech of mine is addressed to some men who have come to my session from behind Mount Qāf.<sup>123</sup> Their feet are in the air, and their hearts are in the presence of holiness [*quds*]. Their hoods and their cotton skullcaps are almost set ablaze by the fierce heat of their ardent longing for their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).’

<sup>123</sup> See note 47 on p. 81 above.

“His son, Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, was present at the session, sitting [below the lectern] beneath his father’s feet. He raised his head toward the sky, and his eyes became glazed for a while, till his skullcap [*tāqiyya*] and his neckband [*ẓīq*] caught fire. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) stepped down and extinguished the flames, then he said: ‘And you, O ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, are one of them.’

“When I asked ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (may Allāh be well pleased with him) what had come over him, he said: ‘When I looked up into the air, I saw some men standing there, with their heads respectfully bowed, as they listened to my father’s speech. They filled the whole horizon. There was fire in their clothes and their garments, and some of them were screaming and crying in the air. Some of them fell to the ground, where the Shaikh was in session, and some of them stayed in their places, trembling and shaking.

“May Allāh be well pleased with them all!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir receives airborne visitors from Mount Lebanon. ☞

Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh al-Iṣfahānī al-Jabalī acquired the surname “al-Jabalī” on account of his prolonged residence at Mount Lebanon [*Jabal Lubnān*]. It was he who said:

“I was at Mount Lebanon one brightly moonlit night, and I saw the local inhabitants teaming up with one another, then flying through the air in the direction of ‘Irāq, group after group. I turned to one of them, a friend of mine, and asked: ‘Where are they going?’ He replied: ‘Khidr<sup>124</sup> (peace be upon him) has instructed us to head for Baghdād, and to present ourselves before the Cardinal Pole [*Quṭb*].’ When I asked him: ‘Who is the Cardinal Pole [*Quṭb*],’ he said: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).’

“I asked my friend for permission to make the journey with him, and he gave his consent, so we set off together, traveling through the air. We arrived in Baghdād in no time at all, to find the rest of them there in front of the Shaikh, row upon row. The seniors among them

<sup>124</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

were saying: 'O our master!' He was giving them instructions, and they were making haste to comply with his every commandment. Then he ordered them to depart, so they withdrew from his presence. They soon became airborne again, and I was flying with them, in the company of my friend.

"Upon our return to Mount Lebanon, I said to my friend: 'I simply cannot see the point of your behavior tonight, in the presence of the Shaikh, and the way you all rushed to comply with his every commandment. It did not seem proper to me.' To this he replied: 'How could it not be appropriate, since he is the one who declared: "My foot is upon the neck of every saint of Allāh," and we have been instructed to obey him and treat him with reverence?

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"



## Some of the invocations, exhortations and explanations delivered by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in his sessions of wise counsel [*majālis wa‘ẓ*].

Our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, and [his brother] Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥman (may Allāh be well pleased with them both) have informed us:

“In his sessions of wise counsel [*majālis wa‘ẓ*], our father [Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir] (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to say:

Praise be to Allāh, Lord of All the Worlds!  
*al-ḥamdu li’llāhi Rabbi ’l-‘ālamīn.*

“Then, after a moment of silence, he would say [a second time]:

Praise be to Allāh, Lord of All the Worlds!  
*al-ḥamdu li’llāhi Rabbi ’l-‘ālamīn.*

“Then, after another moment of silence, he would say [a third time]:

Praise be to Allāh, Lord of All the Worlds!  
*al-ḥamdu li’llāhi Rabbi ’l-‘ālamīn.*

“Then, after a further moment of silence, he would go on to say:

[Praise be to Him in proportion to]  
the number of His creatures,  
*‘adada khalqī-hi*  
and the weight of His Throne,  
*wa zinata ‘Arshī-hi*  
and the good pleasure of His Essence,  
*wa riḍā Nafsi-hi*  
and the content of His words,<sup>125</sup>  
*wa midāda kalimāti-hi*

<sup>125</sup> Literally, “the ink [*midād*] of His words.”

and the extent of His knowledge  
*wa muntahā 'ilmi-hi*

and of all that He has willed  
*wa jamī'i mā shā'a*

and created and fashioned and formed,  
*wa khalaqa wa dhara'a wa bara'a*

[He being] the Knower of the unseen and the visible,  
*'Ālimu 'l-ghaibi wa 'sh-shahāda:*

the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate,  
*ar-Rahmānu 'r-Rahīm:*

the Sovereign Lord, the All-Holy, the Almighty, the All-Wise.  
*al-Maliku 'l-Quddūsu 'l-'Azīzu 'l-Ḥakīm.*

And I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh, Alone.  
*wa ashhadu an lā ilāha illa 'llāhu Waḥda-hu*

No partner has He.  
*lā sharīka la-h*

To Him belongs all sovereignty, and to Him belongs all praise.  
*la-hu 'l-mulku wa la-hu 'l-ḥamd:*

He brings to life and causes to die,  
*yuhyī wa yumītu*

while He is Ever-Living and never dies.  
*wa Huwa Ḥayyun lā yamūt.*

All goodness is in His Hand,  
*bi-yadi-hi 'l-khairu*

and He is Capable of all things.  
*wa Huwa 'alā kulli shai'in Qadīr.*

He has no peer and he has no partner,  
*wa lā nidda la-hu wa lā sharīka la-hu*

and no minister, and no aide, and no assistant.  
*wa lā wazīra wa lā 'awna wa lā ṣahīb.*

[He is] the Single, the One, the Unique, the Everlasting,  
*al-Wāḥidu 'l-Aḥadu 'l-Fardu 'ṣ-Ṣamad:*

Who does not beget and is not begotten,  
*Alladhī lam yalid wa lam yūlad*

and to Whom there is no one equal.  
*wa lam yakun la-hu kufiwwan aḥad.*

He is not a physical body, needing to be fattened,  
*laisa bi-jismin fa-yusammāna*

nor a material substance, needing to be adorned,  
*wa lā jawharin fa-yuḥassana*

nor an accidental property,  
*wa lā 'araḍin*

which would be subject to deficiency.<sup>126</sup>  
*fa-yakūna muntaqaṣan hunālik.*

He has no minister and no associate.  
*wa lā waṣīra la-hu wa lā mushārik.*

He far transcends comparison  
*jalla an yushabbaha*

with that which He has made,  
*bi-mā ṣana'a-hu*

or annexation to that which He has originated.  
*aw yuḍāfa li-ma 'khtara'a-h.*

There is nothing like unto Him,  
*laisa ka-mithli-hi shai':*

for He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.  
*wa Huwa 's-Samī'u 'l-Baṣīr.*

I also bear witness that Muhammad  
*wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan*

(Allāh bless him and give him peace)  
*(ṣalla 'llāhu 'alai-hi wa sallam)*

is His servant and His Messenger,  
*'abdu-hu wa Rasūlu-hu*

and His loved one and His bosom friend,  
*wa ḥabību-hu wa khalīlu-hu*

and His intimate and His confidant,  
*wa ṣafīyyu-hu wa najīyyu-hu*

and His best choice out of all His creatures.  
*wa khīratu-hu min khalqī-h.*

He sent him with right guidance  
*wa arsala-hu bi'l-hudā*

and the religion of Truth,  
*wa dīni 'l-Ḥaqqi*

to make it prevail over all religion,  
*li-yuḡhira-hu 'ala 'd-dīni kulli-hi*

however disgusted the polytheists might be.  
*wa law kariha 'l-mushrikūn.*

“O Allāh, may You be well pleased with that towering pillar of lofty stature, supported by the experience of Reality, the one whose

<sup>126</sup> These are disparaging allusions to the erroneous doctrines of certain heretical sects.

surname is 'Atīq,<sup>127</sup> the Caliph, the inseparable Companion, the product of an ancestral root most pure, whose name is linked to his name, and whose body is buried together with his body: Abū Bakr, the Champion of the Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*].

“And [may You be well pleased] with that model of modest expectation and abundant practical action, immune to cowardice, undaunted by mistakes, unwearied by fatigue, supported by inspired correctness, effective in public speaking, devoutly committed to the prayer-niche [*miḥrāb*], in compliance with whose order the text of the Book was established: Imām Abū Ḥaṣṣ ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

“And [may You be well pleased] with him who equipped the army of the ten, he being the tenth of the ten, from the fortress of faith [*īmān*], and recited the Qur’ān, and scattered the cavaliers, and crushed the sinful rebellion; and who adorned the prayer-niche [*miḥrāb*] by his leadership of the prayer [*imāma*] and the Qur’ān by his style of recitation [*tilāwa*]; the most meritorious of the martyrs [*shuhadā’*] and the most noble of the blissfully fortunate [*su‘adā’*], in whose presence the angels of the All-Merciful [*ar-Raḥmān*] are bashfully shy: the Holder of the Two Lights [*Dhu ‘n-Nūrain*], Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān.<sup>128</sup>

“And [may You be well pleased] with that noble hero and virtuous husband, the paternal cousin of the Messenger, the unsheathed sword of Allāh, the uprooter of the barrier and the vanquisher of the Confederates [*Aḥzāb*],<sup>129</sup> the leader of the religion [*īmām ad-dīn*] and

<sup>127</sup> In addition to his more commonly known appellation *aṣ-Ṣiddīq* [the Champion of Truth], Abū Bakr (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was also given the surname *al-‘Atīq*. According to one traditional account, this was in recognition of his having been told by the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) that he was emancipated [*‘atīq*] from the Fire of Hell and assured of a permanent abode in the Garden of Paradise.

<sup>128</sup> The Caliphate [*Khilāfa*] of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (may Allāh be well pleased with him) began in A.H. 23/643 C.E., when he succeeded ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be well pleased with him) as Commander of the Believers [*Amīr al-Mu‘minīn*], and ended when he was assassinated in A.H. 35/656 C.E., at the age of eighty-two. He is often referred to as *Dhu ‘n-Nūrain* [He of the Two Lights], in honor of the fact that he married two daughters of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace): first Ruqayya, then, after her death, which occurred during the Battle of Badr, her sister Umm Kulthūm (may Allāh be well pleased with them).

<sup>129</sup> As explained by Yūsuf ‘Alī in his commentary on his translation of the Qur’ān (33:1): “The fifth year A.H. was a critical year in the external history of early Islam.... The Grand Confederacy against Islam came and invested Medina and failed utterly. It consisted of the Meccan Unbelievers, the desert Arabs of Central Arabia, the Jews previously expelled for treachery from Medina, the Jews remaining in Medina, and the Hypocrites led by ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubai.”

its scholar [*‘ālim*], the judge of the Sacred Law [*qāḍī ash-Shar‘*] and its arbiter [*ḥākim*], the one who gave his all in devotion to the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], the one for whose ransom Allāh’s Messenger would have sacrificed himself, and the one in whom marvels and wonders were made manifest: Imām Abu ‘l-Ḥusain ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

“And [may You be well pleased] with the [Prophet’s] two grandsons, the martyrs al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain.

“And [may You be well pleased] with the [Prophet’s] two noble paternal uncles, al-Ḥamza and al-‘Abbās.

“And [may You be well pleased] with the Helpers [*Anṣār*] and the Emigrés [*Muhājirīn*], and with their successors in active goodness, till the Day of Judgment [*Yawm ad-Dīn*], O Lord of All the Worlds [*yā Rabba ‘l-‘ālamīn*]!

“O Allāh, grant well-being to the Leader [*Imām*] and the Community [*Umma*], to the shepherd and the flock. Unite their hearts in all things good, and prevent them from treating one another badly.

“O Allāh, you are indeed the Knower [*‘Ālim*] of all our needs, so satisfy them! May You never see us where You have forbidden us to be, and may You never find us missing from where You have commanded us to be. Honor us on account of worshipful obedience, and do not humiliate us on account of sinful disobedience. Keep us preoccupied with You, to the exclusion of everyone apart from You. Separate us from every cause of separation that separates us from You. Grant us the inspiration to remember You, to be thankful to You, and to serve You well.’

“At this point, the Shaikh used to make a sign with his finger, in front of his face, and he would say:

There is no god but Allāh.  
*lā ilāha illa ‘llāh.*

Whatever Allāh wills must surely be,  
*mā shā’a ‘llāhu kāna*

and what He does not will can never be.  
*wa lam yakun mā lam yasha’.*

What wonders Allāh has willed!  
*mā shā’a ‘llāh.*

There is no strength  
*lā quwwata*

except through Allāh, the All-High, the Almighty.  
*illā bi'llāhi 'l-'Alīyyi 'l-'Aẓīm.*

O Allāh, do not cause us to live in a state of heedlessness,  
*Allāhumma lā tuḥyi-nā fī ghaflatin*

and do not snatch us away by surprise.  
*wa lā ta'khudh-nā 'alā ghirra.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Our Lord, do not take us to task  
*Rabba-nā lā tu'ākhidh-nā*

if we forget, or miss the mark.  
*in nasīnā aw akhta'nā.*

Our Lord, do not lay upon us  
*Rabba-nā wa lā taḥmil 'alai-nā*

such a burden  
*iṣran ka-mā*

as You laid upon those before us.  
*ḥamalta-hu 'ala 'lladhīna min qabli-nā.*

Our Lord, do not lay upon us  
*Rabba-nā wa lā tuḥammil-nā*

more than we have the strength to bear.  
*mā lā ṭāqata la-nā bi-h.*

And pardon us, and forgive us,  
*wa 'fu 'an-nā wa 'ghfir la-nā*

and have mercy on us.  
*wa 'rḥam-nā.*

You are our Protector, so help us against  
*Anta Mawlā-nā fa-'nṣur-nā*

the people who are unbelievers.  
*'ala 'l-qawmi 'l-kāfirīn. (2:286)*



## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s words to someone about to make an untimely exit from his session [*majlis*].

**I**f someone got up to leave his session, while that person was still guilty of breaking oaths or violating repentance, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would say:

•Hey, you there! We offered you an opportunity, but you did not respond. We tried many times to restrain you, but you would not refrain. We tried many times to make you act quickly, but you would not take prompt action. We tried many times to reprimand you, but you would not be put to shame. We have tried many times to expose you, for you know that we can see through you. We have granted you respite time and time again, for many days and months. We have welcomed you for years and endless ages, but you have grown in nothing but estrangement, and you show us nothing but iniquity.

•Hey, you there! If you break your pledge and your promises, and go back on your commitment to us, after you have undertaken never to revoke it, despite the fact that we have warned you to keep your word, you had better consider the possible consequences. What if our readiness to grant you pardon does not last forever? How will it be for you, if we reject you or turn you away, if we do not wish to see you, if we neither excuse you nor assist you, or if we leave no room for you here, and refuse to accept your return?

•Do you not realize that you came to us humbly, and stood at our door submissively, but then turned away and left us? How strange of someone who claims to love us, that he would fail to give himself wholeheartedly! How strange of someone who discovers, in our immediate company, the flavors of a draught from the drink of our intimate friendship, that he would choose to isolate himself from our society!

•Hey, you there! If you were honest and truthful, you would relate harmoniously. If you were sociable and friendly, you would not enter into conflict. If you were one of our loving friends, you would not depart from our door, and you would take positive delight in our castigation!

•Hey you there! If only you had never been created! But since you have been created, if only you understood the purpose for which you were created!

•O sleeper, wake up! Open your eyes and look to your front, for the armies of doom have come to seize you, and you would deservedly suffer the torment they bring, but for the tender grace of the All-Generous Giver [*al-Karīm al-Wahhāb*].

•O departing guest, O traveler, O migrant! Take provision and make preparation for your journey. Travel for a thousand years, to hear one single word from me!

•O my brother! By Allāh, I urge you to take heed! You must not be deluded by length of life, abundance of wealth, and social status. For, between the alternating shifts of night and day, many surprising twists and strange events can happen. This world has poisoned many a one like you, among those who have gone before you, so you had better take precautions! She<sup>130</sup> may already have unsheathed her sword to kill you, for she is perfidious and cunningly deceitful. As soon as she has the chance, she will launch an attack on you.

How many a one, just like you, she has dazzled and deluded with her glittering display! She encouraged his ambitious appetites, so he became obedient to her command, attentive to her solemn oath, and ready to follow her wish and her desire. Then, catching him off guard, she gave him a cup of her thirst-quenching poison. He felt nothing amiss, until he noticed that his surroundings were slipping away from him, and he was shedding tears of blood instead of water. Thus he became the pawn of his deeds, lodged in the pit of his grave, till the day when the dead shall be resurrected from their couches.

May Allāh be well pleased with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!

<sup>130</sup> Since the Arabic word *ad-dunyā* [this world] is grammatically feminine, it is easy for an Arabic speaker or writer to personify it as a woman.

## Concerning right and proper conduct [*al-ʿamal aṣ-ṣāliḥ*].

These are some of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir’s sayings (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on the subject of right and proper conduct [*al-ʿamal aṣ-ṣāliḥ*]:

- If someone deals with his Master [*Mawlā*] on the basis of truthfulness [*ṣidq*], sincere intent [*niṣāḥ*], and true devotion [*taqwā*], that person becomes estranged from everything apart from Him, in both the evening and the morning.

- O my people! You must not lay claim to that which is not yours. You must affirm the Oneness [of Allāh], and never attribute partners [to Him].

- Beware of the arrows of destiny [*qadar*], lest they strike you with a fatal wound, instead of a mere scratch.

- If someone meets his end [*talaf*] for Allāh’s sake, Allāh (Exalted is He) will assume the responsibility for those he leaves behind [*khalaf*].

- This you must know (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon you all): If you do not adapt yourselves to the currents of the Divine decrees [*aqḍiya*], they are bound to shatter you.

- The heart does not receive preferential treatment [from the Lord] until the lower self [*nafs*] is ready for such preference, and comes to be like the dog belonging to the People of the Cave [*Ahl al-Kahf*],<sup>131</sup> which lay reclining on its breast at the entrance. It must hear the call:

O self now at peace,  
*yā ayyatuha ʿn-nafsu ʿl-muṭmaʿinna:*

<sup>131</sup> The story of the People of the Cave is told in the 18th Sūra of the Qurʾān (*Sūrat al-Kahf*).

Return unto your Lord,  
*irji' i ilā Rabbi-ki*  
well pleased, well pleasing!  
*rādiyatan mardīyya. (89:27,28)*

Only then will the heart gain admission to the [Divine] presence [*ḥadra*], and become a focal point [*ka'ba*] for the glances of the Lord (Glory be to Him, and Exalted is He). The Majesty of the Sovereign [*Jalāl al-Malik*] will then be disclosed to the heart. Its titles will be conferred upon it, its inheritance will be placed at its disposal, and the proclamation will be heard from the highest height: "O My servant—and everything is My servant—you are Mine, and I am yours!"

In due course, when it has spent a long time in His company, the heart will become the King's confidant [*biṭānat al-Malik*], His deputy [*khalīfa*] in charge of His subjects, and the custodian [*amīn*] entrusted with His secrets. He will send it on missions to the ocean, in order to rescue the drowning, and to the land, in order to give guidance to those who have gone astray. If it comes across a corpse, it will bring it back to life. If it comes across a disobedient sinner, it will remind him of his duty. If it comes across a distant stranger, it will bring him close to home. If it comes across a miserable wretch, it will make him blissfully happy.

•The saint [*walī*] is the loyal servant of the spiritual deputy [*badal*], while the spiritual deputy is the loyal servant of the Prophet [*Nabī*], and the Prophet is the loyal servant of the Messenger (may Allāh bless them all).

•The likeness of the saints [*awliyā'*] is that of the king's entertainer, who can never leave his company. The night is the lofty couch of their King, and the day keeps them near at hand.

•O my dear son, do not relate your dream to your brothers!



## Concerning the experience of personal extinction [*fanā'*].

These are some of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's sayings (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on the subject of extinction [*fanā'*]:

- You must become extinct to creatures [*khalq*], in accordance with the judgment [*ḥukm*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), and to your passionate desire [*hawā*], in compliance with the commandment [*amr*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), and to your self-will [*irāda*], in keeping with the action [*fi'l*] of Allāh (Exalted is He). Only then will you become a worthy vessel for the knowledge [*'ilm*] of Allāh (Exalted is He).

- As for the sign of your extinction [*fanā'*] to creatures [*khalq*], it is your complete detachment from them, and the renunciation of what they have at their disposal.

- As for the sign of your extinction [*fanā'*] to you and your passionate desire [*hawā*], it is your abandonment of dependence on secondary causation [*tasabbub*] in the pursuit of benefit and the avoidance of harm. You must not experience any movement in you [that arises] because of you. You must not rely on you for you. You must not repel things from you. You must not breathe for your own sake. You must rather entrust all that to the One who took care of it at the very beginning, and who will take care of it at the very end.

- As for the sign of your extinction [*fanā'*] to your self-will [*irāda*], it is that you make no effort to exert your own will, in competition with the Will of Allāh (Exalted is He). It is rather that His action [*fi'l*] operates in you, while you remain calm and still in your physical limbs and organs, with the heart [*janān*] at peace and the breast relaxed, inwardly alive [*'āmir al-bāṭin*], and free from all dependence on things. The hand of Divine power [*qudra*] turns you this way and

that, and the tongue of sempiternity [*azal*] calls out to you. The Lord of Sovereignty [*Rabb al-Mulk*] teaches you, clothes you in fine garments made from His light, and settles you in the abodes of the ancient possessors of primeval knowledge. You are thus forever broken, in the sense that no will [*irāda*] is firmly fixed in you, apart from the Will of Allāh (Exalted is He).

- From this point on, creative power [*takwīn*] and supernatural abilities [*kharq al-‘ādāt*] will be assigned to you. From a superficial perspective, all of that will seem to emanate from you, whereas, from the standpoint of true knowledge, it is really the action of Allāh.

- This amounts to a rebirth, so, if a sense of purpose [*irāda*] exists within you, it will mature as your new life develops, until that life reaches its appointed term, and the Meeting [*Liqā’*] comes to pass.

- Extinction [*fanā’*] is a termination [*ḥadd*] and a reversion [*maradd*]. It means that Allāh (Exalted is He), and He Alone, remains in being, as He was before He created the creation. Such is the state of extinction [*fanā’*]. If you die to the creation, you will therefore be addressed with: “May Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon you! [*raḥīma-ka ‘llāhu (ta’ālā)*].”

- If you die to self-will [*irāda*], you will be addressed with: “May Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon you, and may He restore you to life! [*raḥīma-ka ‘llāhu (ta’ālā) wa aḥyā-k*].” From that moment on, you will live a new life, a life after which there is no death. You will enjoy a wealth after which there is no poverty. You will receive a giving after which there is no withholding. You will be taught a knowledge after which there is no ignorance. You will feel a sense of security after which there is no fear. You will experience such happiness that you can never be miserable. You will be treated so honorably that you can never be humiliated. You will be drawn so close that you can never be far removed. You will be held in such high esteem that you can never be despised. You will be kept so pure that you can never be defiled.

## Concerning truthfulness [*ṣidq*].<sup>132</sup>

These are some of the sayings of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on the subject of truthfulness [*ṣidq*]:

- O young man, it is incumbent upon you to practice truthfulness [*ṣidq*] and candor [*ṣafā’*], for without these two, a human being can never draw close to Allāh (Exalted is He).

- O young man, if the rock of your heart were beaten with the staff of Moses [*‘aṣā Mūsā*]—with sincerity [*ikhhlāṣ*], in other words—the fountains of wisdom would gush forth from it.

- On the wing of sincerity [*ikhhlāṣ*], the man of insight [*‘ārif*] flies from the cage of the universe, and soars into the vastness of the Light of Holiness [*Nūr al-Quds*]. He then alights, at the end of his flight, in the shade of the gardens of a seat of truthfulness [*maq’ad ṣidq*].<sup>133</sup>

- O young man, whenever the light of certainty [*yaqīn*] shines in the heart of a servant [of the Lord], his facial features glow with the radiance of the light of the saints [*awliyā’*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them all). The angels call his name in the Highest Kingdom [*Malakūt*], and the Day of Resurrection dawns in the community of the truthful [*ṣādiqīn*].

- O young man, the renouncing of selfish desires is not just a form of detachment [*tajrīd*]; it is an affirmation of Allāh’s Oneness [*tawḥīd*]. It beams forth the brilliant rays of the ardor of its yearning [*‘ishq*], targeting the feelings of those who learn by direct experience

<sup>132</sup> See note 7 on p. 32 above.

<sup>133</sup> An allusion to Q. 54:54,55:

Surely the righteous will dwell  
amid gardens and a river,  
in a seat of truthfulness,  
in the presence of a King All-Powerful.

inna ‘l-muttaqīna  
fī jannātīn wa nahar:  
fī maq’adi ṣidqīn  
‘inda Malīkin Muqtadir.

[*ʿarīfīn*], until they derive no pleasure from any other connection. Such is the desperate longing [*ḥaīm*] of the hearts of the bewildered, until they finally arrive in the valleys of His love [*ḥubb*].

• O young man, the road to Allāh (Exalted is He) is a road that cannot be traveled, unless the traveler is fully equipped with truthfulness [*ṣidq*]. As for presence in His company, it cannot be achieved without the demolition of the molds, and the distillation in the Hereafter of the drink of direct vision. Contact with Him can only be attained after fasting from this world, and from all that it contains. A glance from Him to you is hardly expensive, at the price of abandoning worldly existence. A quick look from Him does not cost you very much, at the price of detachment from all created beings.

• O young man, once the self [*naḥs*] is purified of human mud and dirt, it will be ready to obey the [Divine] commandments. Once the mind of the *ʿarīf* [one who learns by direct experience] acquires the faculty of vision, the radiant lights of his Maker [*Bāriʿ*] will shine upon his innermost being [*sirr*].

• O young man, the saints [*awliyāʿ*] are the privileged élite of the Emperor [*Sulṭān*], while those who learn by direct experience [*ʿarīfūn*] are the intimate courtiers of the king [who pays tribute to the Emperor]. Before you can savor the sweetness of the honey of the saints [*awliyāʿ*], you must taste the bitterness of the patience of the spiritual deputies [*budalāʿ*].

• O young man, the eyes of the minds of the paragons of virtue [*fuḥūl*] have not paid any attention to this world, nor have they been deceived by the snares of its dazzling display. No indeed, for they have understood what the Beloved meant, when He said about it:

The life of this world  
*wa ma ʿl-ḥayātu ʿd-dunyā*  
is nothing but the comfort of illusion.  
*illā matāʿu ʿl-ghurūr.* (3:185)

• O young man, through their regular indulgence in lustful pleasures, Satan enters into people's hearts, and through the loopholes of carnal desires, he finds his way into their breasts. He misleads the servant [of the Lord] through the pursuit of worldly interests. Congratulations, therefore, to anyone whose mind wakes up from the

slumber of heedlessness, whose motivation is purified through the quest for the nearness of his Master [*Mawlā*], who receives an education by moving toward the Swiftest of reckoners [*Asra' al-ḥāsibīn*],<sup>134</sup> who buckles up for the race to the Hereafter, and who settles his personal account with that which he is bound to leave behind, because this world is but the field of passage, and the Final Hour [*Sā'a*] is more momentous and calamitous.

As soon as we spoke the truth, the veils were lifted between us.  
But for that truthful speech, the veils would not have been lifted.



<sup>134</sup> An allusion to Q. 6:62:

Surely His is the judgment.  
And He is the Swiftest of reckoners.

*a-lā la-hu 'l-ḥukmu*  
*wa Huwa Asra' u 'l-ḥāsibīn.*

## Concerning *tanzīh* [the affirmation of Allāh's freedom from all imperfection].

These are some of the sayings of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) concerning *tanzīh* [the affirmation of Allāh's freedom from all imperfection]:

•Our Lord, Allāh (Exalted is He), is the Near in His sublimity,  
*Rabbu-na 'llāhu ta'āla 'l-Qarību fī 'uluwwi-h:*

the High-Exalted in His proximity.

*al-Muta'ālī fī dunuwwi-h.*

•[He is] the Maker of the creation by His power,  
*Bārī'u 'l-khalqī bi-qudrati-hi*

and the Foreordainer of all matters by His wisdom,  
*wa Muqaddiru 'l-umūri bi-ḥikmati-hi*

and the Encircler of all things with His knowledge.  
*wa 'l-Muḥīṭu bi-kulli shai'in 'ilma-h.*

•His word is complete and His mercy is universal.  
*tammāt kalīmatu-hu wa 'ammat raḥmatu-h.*

•There is no god but He.  
*lā ilāha illā Hū.*

•Liars are they who attribute equals to Him,  
*kadhaba 'l-'ādilūna bi-hi*

as are they who claim that He has a peer,  
*wa mani 'dda'a la-hu niddan*

or believe that He has a likeness or a namesake.  
*awi 'taqada la-hu shabīḥan aw samiyyā.*

•Glory be to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)  
*subḥāna 'llāhi ('azza wa jall).*

•Glory be to Allāh  
*subḥāna 'llāhi*

[in proportion to]  
the number of His creatures,  
*‘adada khalqī-hi*  
and the good pleasure of His Essence,  
*wa riḍā Nafsi-hi*  
and the weight of His Throne,  
*wa zinata ‘Arshi-hi*  
and the content of His words,<sup>135</sup>  
*wa midāda kalimāti-hi*  
and the extent of His knowledge  
*wa muntahā ‘ilmi-hi*  
and of all that He has willed  
*wa jamī‘i mā shā’a*  
and created and fashioned and formed,  
*wa khalaqa wa dhara’a wa bara’a*  
[He being] the Knower of the unseen and the visible,  
*‘Ālimu ‘l-ghaibi wa ‘sh-shahāda:*  
the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate,  
*ar-Raḥmānu ‘r-Raḥīm:*  
the Sovereign Lord, the All-Holy, the Almighty, the All-Wise,  
*al-Maliku ‘l-Quddūsu ‘l-‘Azīzu ‘l-Ḥakīm.*  
Single, One, Unique, Everlasting.  
*Wāḥidun Aḥadun Fardun Ṣamad:*  
•He does not beget and is not begotten,  
*lam yalid wa lam yūlad*  
and to Him there is no one equal.  
*wa lam yakun la-hu kufuwān aḥad. (112:3,4)*  
•There is nothing like unto Him,  
*laisa ka-mithli-hi shai’.*  
for He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.  
*wa Huwa ‘s-Samī‘u ‘l-Baṣīr. (42:11)*  
•He has no likeness and no counterpart,  
*lā shabiha la-hu wa lā naẓīr:*  
and He has no aide and no assistant,  
*wa lā ‘awna la-hu wa lā ẓahīr:*  
and He has no partner and no minister,  
*wa lā sharīka la-hu wa lā wazīr:*  
and He has no peer and no adviser.  
*wa lā nidda la-hu wa lā mushīr.*

<sup>135</sup>Literally, “the ink [*midād*] of His words.”

•He is not a physical body, that could be touched.

*laisa bi-jismin fa-yumassa*

nor a material substance, that could be felt,

*wa lā jawharin fa-yuḥassa*

nor an accidental property, that could be discarded,

*wa lā 'aradīn fa-yantafiya*

nor a compound structure, that could be dismantled,

*wa lā dhī tarkībīn fa-yataba''ada*

nor a mechanical apparatus, that could be replicated,

*wa lā dhī ālatin fa-yumthala*

nor a composition, that could be modified

*wa lā dhī ta'līfīn fa-yukayyafa*

nor a figment of the imagination, that could be defined,

*wa lā dhī māhiyatīn mukhayyalatīn fa-yuḥaddada*

nor a natural phenomenon, among other such phenomena,

*wa lā dhī ṭabī'atīn minā 'ṭ-ṭabā'i'i*

nor a celestial body, among other celestial bodies,

*wa lā ṭālī'a minā 'ṭ-ṭalā'i'i*

nor a darkness, that could become transparent,

*wa lā ḡulmatan fa-taḡhara*

nor lamplight, that could shine.

*wa lā nūran fa-yazḡhar.*

•[He is] Present to things in respect of knowledge,

*Ḥāḍīru 'l-ashyā'a 'ilman*

but without intermingling,

*min ḡhairi mumāzaja:*

[and He is] a Witness to them in respect of observation,

*Shāhidun la-ha 'ṭṭilā'an*

but without physical touching.

*min ḡhairi mumāssa.*

•[He is] Irresistible, Decisive, Unique,

*Qāhirun Ḥākimun Fardun*

Worthy of worship, One who will never pass away,

*Ma'būdīyyun lā yafūt:*

Sempiternal, One who will never die,

*Azaliyyun lā yamūt.*

Governing, Just, Powerful,

*Ḥākimun 'Ādilun Qādirun*

Compassionate, Forgiving, Pardoning,

*Rāḡimun Ḡḡafirun Sātīrun*

Creator, Maker,  
*Khāliqun Fāṭirun*

Eternal Lord of the Realm of Sovereignty,  
*Abadiyyu 'l-Malakūt:*

Everlasting Lord of the Realm of Dominion,  
*Sarmadiyyu 'l-Jabarūt.*

Self-Sustaining, One who never sleeps,  
*Qayyūmun lā yanām:*

Almighty, One who can never be harmed,  
*'Azīzun lā yuḍām:*

Impregnable, One who can never be assailed.  
*Manī'un lā yurām.*

•His are the Most Beautiful Names,  
*la-hu 'l-Asmā'u 'l-Ḥusnā*

and the loftiest attributes,  
*wa 'ṣ-ṣifātu 'l-'ulyā*

and the ideal paradigm,  
*wa 'l-mathalu 'l-a'lā*

and the most lasting glory.  
*wa 'l-jaddu 'l-abqā*

•Imaginations cannot picture Him,  
*lā tuṣawwiru-hu 'l-awhām:*

and understandings cannot appraise Him,  
*wa lā tuqaddiru-hu 'l-afhām:*

and He is not subject to analogy,  
*wa lā yudraku bi'l-qiyās:*

and He cannot be compared with people,  
*wa lā yumaththalu bi'n-nās:*

and minds cannot describe Him,  
*wa lā yukayyifu-hu 'l-'uqūl:*

and intellects cannot define him.  
*wa lā taḥuddu-hu 'l-adhḥān.*

•He far transcends comparison  
*jalla an yushabbaha*

with that which He has made,  
*bi-mā ṣana'a-hu*

or annexation to that which He has originated.  
*aw yuḍāfa li-ma 'khtara'a-h.*

•[He is] the Reckoner of breaths.  
*Muḥṣi 'l-anfās.*

•[He is] Holding every soul  
*Qā'imun 'alā kulli nafsin*

responsible for what it has earned.  
*bi-mā kasabat. (13:33)*

•He has already counted them [His creatures]  
*la-qad aḥṣā-hum*

and added them all up,  
*wa 'adda-hum 'addā:*

and all of them will come to Him  
*wa kullu-hum ātī-hi*

on the Day of Resurrection, one by one.  
*Yawma 'l-Qiyāmati fardā.*

•He feeds, but is not fed.  
*yut'imu wa lā yut'am:*

•He nourishes, but is not nourished.  
*yarzuqu wa lā yurzaq.*

•He protects, but does not need protection.  
*yujīru wa lā yujāru 'alai-h.*

•He created that which He originated,  
*khalaqa ma 'btada'a*

not for the sake of procurement.  
*lā li'l-ijtilāb:*

•He provided benefit,  
*nafa'a*

though not to ward off harm,  
*wa lā li-daf'i ḍarrin*

nor in response to someone who appealed to Him,  
*wa lā li-dā'in da'ā-hu*

nor because of a thought that occurred by chance,  
*wa lā li-fikrin ḥadath:*

but rather by an absolute Will,  
*bal bi-irādatin mujarradatin*

independent of novel interpretations.  
*'an ta'bīrāti 'l-ḥidhān:*

•As He has said (Exalted is He):  
*ka-mā qāla ta'ālā*

•[He is] Lord of the Throne, the All-Glorious.  
*Dhu 'l-'arshi 'l-Majīd:*

Effective in doing whatever He wishes.  
*Fa''ālun li-mā yurīd. (85:15,16)*

•He is the Sole Possessor of the power to originate substances, to expose harm, to remove misfortune, to transform substances, and to alter conditions.

Every day He is about some awesome business.  
*kulla yawmin Huwa fī sha'n.* (55:29)

•He dispatches that which He has predestined to the time He has appointed.

•He has no assistant in the management of His kingdom.

•[He is] Ever-Living [*Hāyy*], with a life that is neither acquired nor precedented.

•[He is] Aware of an unseen realm [*ʿĀlim bi-ghaib*] that is neither newly invented nor inaccessible nor finite.

•[He is] Powerful [*Qādir*], with a power that is unrestricted.

•[He is] Ever-Managing [*Mudabbir*], with a purpose that is not apparent [to His creatures], and that is never unsustained.

•[He is] Ever-Attentive [*Hāfiẓ*]; He never forgets.

•[He is] Ever-Alert [*Qayyūm*]; He is never absentminded.

•[He is] Ever-Watchful [*Raqīb*]; He is never heedless.

•[He is] Ever-Patient [*Ḥalīm*]; He is never in a hurry.

•[He is] Ever-Prompt [*Sālib*]; He never dawdles.

•He constricts and He expands [*yaqbiḍu wa yabsuṭ*].

•He can be well pleased, and He can be angry [*yardā wa yaghḍab*].

•He forgives and He grants mercy [*yaghfiru wa yarḥam*].

•He has brought into being, and He has annihilated, so He fully deserves to be called Omnipotent [*Qādir*].

•He has removed the defects of His creatures, and caused them to appear in perfect shape, so He fully deserves to be called Lord [*Rabb*].

•He has caused the actions of His servants to proceed from them, in accordance with the requirement of His Will, so He fully deserves to be called All-Knowing in Reality [*ʿĀlim ʿala ʿl-Ḥaqq*].

• No one resembles Him, and no one is similar or comparable in any respect, either in essence [*dhāt*] or in attributes [*awṣāf*], to His Essence and His Attributes, so it is necessary to say of Him:

There is nothing like unto Him,  
*laisa ka-mithli-hi shai'.*

for He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing,  
*wa Huwa 's-Samī'u 'l-Baṣīr.* (42:11)

• Whatever exists, it owes its existence to the everlastingness [*daimūmiyya*] of His sempiternity [*aẓal*].

• Whatever is alive [*ḥayy*], its life [*ḥayāt*] has been acquired by His command.

• If the mind attempts to coin a similitude [*mathal*] for His Might [*Izza*], or if the intellect embarks on a discussion concerning His Majesty [*Jalāl*], the intellect will grind to a weary halt in the face of His Sublime Glory [*Aẓama*]. While the mental process winds up in confusion and exhaustion, the process of glorification [*ta'ẓīm*] continues unabated.

• There can be no substitute for the affirmation that Allāh is absolutely free of imperfection [*tanzīh*], nor any alternative to the affirmation of Allāh's Oneness [*tawḥīd*].

• The armies of sanctification [*taqḍīs*] have marched to the fore, advancing by the beaten tracks of confirmation [*taqrīr*].

• The intellects have been screened by the robe of His Grandeur [*Kibriyā'*], to preclude familiarity with the true nature of His Essence [*Dhāt*].

• The eyes have been prevented, by the light of His Perpetuity [*Baqā'*], from perceiving the reality of His Singularity [*Aḥadiyya*].

• The ultimate aims of the sciences of the realities [*'ulūm al-ḥaqā'iq*] have thus become elevated, for they must follow knowledge tested by experience.

• As for the farthest goals of the esoteric sciences of the heavenly kingdoms [*ma'ārif al-mamālik*], they have also risen aloft, glowing brightly. They are illumined by a ray from pre-eternity [*aẓal*], which is masked [*mubārqa'*] by the veil of perfection [*kamāl*] from the

shortcomings of comparison [*tashbīh*], for nothing could surpass its brilliant splendor [*sanā*].

- Their perceptions and their faculties were blotted out, in contemplating the conjunction of the attributes of eternity-without-beginning [*qidam*] with the properties of eternity-without-end [*abad*], for it is a conjunction that has never ceased, that has no precedent, and that will never reach a point of separation.

- From the Presence of Holiness [*Quds*] Most Noble, there has appeared an Awe-inspiring Dignity that kills deficiencies; a Singularity that prevents multiplicity; a State of Being that transcends limitation; a Majesty that defies description, a Perfection that eliminates comparison; a Quality that necessitates unity; a Power that extends dominion; a Glory that exhausts all expressions of praise; and a Knowledge that encompasses whatever is in the heavens, whatever is on the earth, whatever is between them, whatever is underneath the ground, whatever is in the depth of the oceans, the root of every hair and every tree, the fall of every leaf, the number of all the pebbles and all the grains of sand, the weights of the mountains and the measures of the seas, the deeds and works of human beings, and all the breaths they breathe.

- He is Distinct [*Bā'in*] from His creation.

- No place is secluded from His knowledge.

- The intellectual faculties have therefore withdrawn in retreat, possessing no knowledge apart from the verification of His Oneness [*Aḥadiyya*], and the assurance that He is the First [*al-Awwal*], by virtue of the everlastingness of His eternity-without-beginning [*azaliyya*], and the Last [*al-Ākhir*], by virtue of the perpetuity of His eternity-without-end [*abadiyya*].

- Qualification and comparison do not enter into His Eternal Divinity [*Ṣamadiyya*]. He has made Himself known to His creatures through His Attributes [*Ṣifāt*], so that they may affirm His Oneness and confirm His Existence, not so that they may compare Him to anything. Faith [*īmān*] confirms their truth with the knowledge of certainty [*ilm al-yaqīn*], and in recognition of the proof of their reality [*tahqīq*].

• There is no scope for the mind in trying to conceive Him. As for whatever the imagination relates, or the understanding expounds, or the intellect suggests, or the brain portrays, the Sublime Glory [*ʿAzama*] of Allāh (Exalted is He) is at variance with all of that, as are His Majesty [*Jalāl*] and His Grandeur [*Kibriyāʾ*].

He is the First and the Last,  
*Huwa 'l-Awwalu wa 'l-Ākhiru*  
and the Outer and the Inner,  
*wa 'z-Zāhiru wa 'l-Bāṭin:*  
and He is Aware of all things.  
*wa Huwa bi-kulli shai'in 'Alīm. (57:3)*



## Concerning the nature of the human being [*khulq al-ādamī*].

These are some of the sayings of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) concerning the nature of the human being [*khulq al-ādamī*]:

- How marvelous is the creation of this human being [*basharī*], and how marvelous is the wisdom of the Maker [*ḥikmat aṣ-Ṣāni‘*] in His work! Blessed and Exalted is He!

- The human being would be a sovereign ruler, by virtue of his intellect, but for the inclination to follow his passionate desire. He would have a truly gracious character, but for the coarseness of his constitution.

- The human being is a treasure house, stocked with the wondrous mysteries of the Unseen [*Ghaib*], along with vast hoards of every kind of fault [*‘aib*].

- The human being is a vessel, filled with light and darkness, in which the veil of the bride of the Spirit [*Rūḥ*] has called for the veiling of all forms, to screen them from the eyes of jealous rivals.

- The human being is a prodigious wonder, whose beauty the Power [of the Lord] displayed to His servants, the angels, clad in the fine garments of:

And We have indeed honored  
*wa la-qad karramnā*  
the Children of Adam.  
*banī Ādam.* (17:70)

—at a session [*majlis*] [held in His presence, where He also said]:

And We have granted them a special favor.  
*wa faddalnā-hum.* (17:70)

—meaning the faculty of reason [*‘aql*], with an indication that it is a favor from the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible [*‘Ālim al-Ḡhaib wa ’sh-Shahāda*].

•The oysters of the temples [*hayākil*] carried the pearls of the spirits through the oceans of existence, aboard the ships of knowledge, in order to perfect the radiance of the light of certainty. Driven by the wind of the Spirit [*rīḥ ar-Rūḥ*], they voyaged to the treasuries of the sacred struggle [*mujāhada*].

•Within the human being, the Sulṭān of reason [*‘aql*] stood opposite the Sulṭān of passionate desire [*hawā*], and the two of them clashed and fought in the courtyard of his breast.

•The lower self [*naḥs*] was one of the marshals of the armies of Sulṭān of passionate desire, and the spirit was one of the generals of the armies of the Sulṭān of reason.

•The herald of judgment [*ḥukm*] called out amongst them: “O cavalry of Allāh, ride forth! O squadrons of the Truth, appear! O troops of passionate desire, advance!”

•Each of them wished for the victory of his own forces, and each of them tried to conquer his opponent.

•The voice of enabling grace [*tawfiq*] spoke to the pair of them, in the ancient tongue of the Unseen [*Ḡhaib*], saying: “Whomever I support, the flag of victory will be tied to his banners. Whomever I assist, he will be the fortunate one in this world and the Hereafter. Whomever I am with, I shall not part from him, until I have brought him to a seat of truthfulness [*maq‘ad ṣidq*].”<sup>136</sup>

•Enabling grace [*tawfiq*] is the approving glance of the Lord of Truth (Glory be to him), directed toward His protégé [*walī*] through the eye of His providential care [*‘ināya*].

•O young man! You must follow reason [*‘aql*], for it will steer your course on the path of the greatest bliss. You must become detached from your lower self [*naḥs*] and your passionate desire [*hawā*], for then you will see the true marvel.

•The spirit [*rūḥ*] is heavenly, invisible, while the lower self [*naḥs*] is terrestrial, earthy.

<sup>136</sup> See note 133 on p. 258 above.

•The bird of the graceful [*laṭīf*] flies out of the nest of the coarse [*kathīf*], on the wing of providential care [*‘ināya*], up into the tree on high. It nests on the bough of nearness [to the Lord], warbles with the musical tone of the language of ardent yearning, sings the song of intimate friendship, and gleans the jewels of the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*] from between the wings of direct experiences [*ma’ārif*].

•As for [the bird of] the coarse [*kathīf*], it stays trapped in the cage of the gloom of its existence.

•When the molds become extinct, the inner secrets of the hearts remain intact.

•If He casts an approving glance into your heart, He will set it on the platform of His Throne [*‘Arsh*], entrust it with the true facts of the sciences [*ḥaqā’iq al-‘ulūm*], and make it the treasury of the secrets of direct knowledge [*ma’rifat*]. Then you will behold, with your rational intellect, the beauty of eternity-without-beginning [*azal*]. You will turn away from everything qualified by the attributes of novelty. The vision of your innermost being [*sirr*] will perceive the shapes of the worlds of the Realm of Sovereignty [*Malakūt*], in the mirror of nearness [to the Lord]. Displayed to the eye of your secret soul [*sarīra*] will be the brides of revelation [*‘arā’is al-fath*], in the session of the disclosure of the real meanings of the signs [*āyāt*], for all traces of the scribblings of the universe will have been erased from the tablet of your aspiration [*himma*].

•Hey, you there! When the faculties of reason [*‘uqūl*] are unfolded, the stallions are saddled in the shade. Pure thoughts are the signposts of the lords of direct knowledge and predestined providence.

•When suspicions abound and the will is thereby affected, you must remove the veil of your doubt from the faces of the maidens of certainty. When the signposts become too few and far between, you must cut off the thoughts of falsehood with the hand of Truth.

## Concerning the Supreme Name [*al-Ism al-A‘ẓam*].

These are some of the sayings of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) concerning the Supreme Name [*al-Ism al-A‘ẓam*]:

- The Supreme Name of Allāh is “Allāh.”
- You will only receive an answer [to your supplication] if you say “Allāh,” while your heart contains nothing apart from Him.
- When pronounced by those who really understand its inner meanings, “In the Name of Allāh” [*Bismi’llāh*]” is on a par with the injunction “Be! [*Kun*],” pronounced by Allāh (Exalted is He).
- This is a word that banishes anxiety and worry [*ḥamm*]. This is a word that clears away sorrow and grief [*ghamm*]. This is a word that neutralizes poison [*samm*]. This is a word the light of which is all-pervading.
- Allāh conquers every conqueror.
- Allāh is the Source of the manifestation of wonders.
- Allāh’s authority is lofty, and His dignity is unassailable.
- Allāh is Ever-Cognizant [*Muṭṭali‘*] of His servants.
- Allāh is Ever-Watchful [*Raḳīb*] over the heart and the inner core.
- Allāh is Victorious over the tyrants [*Qāḥir al-jabābira*].
- Allāh is the Vanquisher of the Caesars [*Qāṣim al-Akāsira*].
- Allāh is Aware [*‘Ālim*] of what is done in secret and what is done in public. Nothing can be concealed from Allāh.
- When someone exists for the sake of Allāh, he is always in the safekeeping of Allāh (Exalted is He).

- When someone loves Allāh (Exalted is He), he pays no attention to anything other than Allāh (Exalted is He).

- If someone follows the path of Allāh, he will attain to Allāh (Exalted is He), and if someone attains to Allāh (Exalted is He), he will live in the protection of Allāh (Exalted is He).

- If someone ardently yearns for Allāh (Exalted is He), he will enjoy intimate friendship with Allāh (Exalted is He).

- If someone forsakes all others, he will spend all his time in the company of Allāh (Exalted is He).

- You must knock at the door of Allāh (Exalted is He).

- You must take refuge with Allāh (Exalted is He).

- You must place all your trust in Allāh (Exalted is He).

- O retrograde! You must return to Allāh (Exalted is He).

- [Allāh says]: “This is the way My Name is heard in the realm of transitory existence [*dār al-fanā*’] so how must it be in the Realm of Perpetuity [*Dār al-Baqā*’]?”

- “This is how it is in the realm of trial [*miḥna*], so how must it be in the Realm of Grace [*ni‘ma*]?”

- “This is the sound of My Name when you are at the door, so how must it be when the barrier is removed?”

- “This is how it is when I am invoked, so how must it be when I reveal Myself?”

- The people will be in the state of direct witnessing, while the oceans of union flood over them.

- The lover [*muḥibb*] is like those birds that never sleep, perched up high in the trees. He serenades his beloved in the hours before the break of day.

- The fragrant breeze of nearness wafts upon their hearts, so they yearn for their Lord.

- [Allāh says:]

“Remember Me with submission and resignation,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’t-taslīmi wa ’t-tafwīd:*

and I will remember you with the worthiest of preference.”  
*adhkur-kum bi-aṣḥaḥi 'l-ikhtiyār.*

Such is the obvious meaning of His words (Exalted is He):

And whoever puts all his trust in Allāh,  
*wa man yatawakkal 'ala 'llāhi*

He will suffice him.  
*fa-Huwa ḥasbuh. (65:3)*

•“Remember Me with ardent yearning and loving affection,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'sh-shawqi wa 'l-maḥabba:*

and I will remember you with contact and nearness.  
*adhkur-kum bi'l-waṣḥi wa 'l-qurba.*

•“Remember Me with praise and adoration,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'l-ḥamdi wa 'th-thanā':*

and I will remember you with favors and reward.  
*adhkur-kum bi'l-minani wa 'l-jazā'.*

•“Remember Me with repentance,  
*udhkurū-nī bi't-tawba:*

and I will remember you with the forgiveness of sin.  
*adhkur-kum bi-ghufrāni 'l-ḥawba.*

•“Remember Me with supplication,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'd-du'ā':*

and I will remember you with giving.  
*adhkur-kum bi'l-'aṭā'.*

•“Remember Me with asking,  
*udhkurū-nī bi's-su'āl:*

and I will remember you with granting.  
*adhkur-kum bi'n-nawāl.*

•“Remember Me without neglect,  
*udhkurū-nī bi-lā ghafla:*

and I will remember you without delay.  
*adhkur-kum bi-lā muhla.*

•“Remember Me with remorse,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'n-nadam:*

and I will remember you with honor.  
*adhkur-kum bi'l-karam.*

•“Remember Me with apology,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'l-ma'dhira:*

and I will remember you with forgiveness.  
*adhkur-kum bi'l-maghfira.*

- “Remember Me with the intention,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-irāda:*

and I will remember you with the implementation.  
*adhkur-kum bi’l-ifāda.*

- “Remember Me with renunciation,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’t-tanaṣṣul:*

and I will remember you with gracious favor.  
*adhkur-kum bi’t-tafaḍḍul.*

- “Remember Me with sincere devotion,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-ikhhlās:*

and I will remember you with salvation.  
*adhkur-kum bi’l-khalāṣ.*

- “Remember Me with your hearts,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-qulūb:*

and I will remember you with relief from cares.  
*adhkur-kum bi-kashfi ’l-kurūb.*

- “Remember Me with the tongue,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-lisān:*

and I will remember you with security.  
*adhkur-kum bi’l-amān.*

- “Remember Me with poverty,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-iftiqār:*

and I will remember you with ability.  
*adhkur-kum bi’l-iqtidār.*

- “Remember Me with the plea for pardon and forgiveness,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-i’tidhāri wa ’l-istighfār:*

and I will remember you with mercy and indulgence.  
*adhkur-kum bi’r-rahmati wa ’l-ightifār.*

- “Remember Me with faith,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-īmān:*

and I will remember you with the Gardens of Paradise.  
*adhkur-kum bi’l-jinān.*

- “Remember Me with surrender,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-islām:*

and I will remember you with honor.  
*adhkur-kum bi’l-ikrām.*

- “Remember Me with the heart,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-qalb:*

and I will remember you with the lifting of the veil.  
*adhkur-kum bi-raf’i ’l-hajb.*

• “Remember Me with a fleeting remembrance,  
*udhkurū-nī dhikran fāniyā:*

and I will remember you with a permanent remembrance.  
*adhkur-kum dhikran bāqiyā.*

• “Remember Me with humble entreaty,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'l-ibtihāl:*

and I will remember you with connection.  
*adhkur-kum bi'l-ittiṣāl.*

• “Remember Me with self-abasement,  
*udhkurū-nī bi't-tadhallul:*

and I will remember you with the pardoning of errors.  
*adhkur-kum bi-'afwi 'z-zalal.*

• “Remember Me with virtue,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'l-'aḡāf:*

and I will remember you with the obliteration of guilt.  
*adhkur-kum bi-maḡwi 'l-iqtirāf.*

• “Remember Me with purity of the innermost being,  
*udhkurū-nī bi-ṣafā'i 's-sirr:*

and I will remember you with the deliverance of piety.  
*adhkur-kum bi-khalāṣi 'l-birr.*

• “Remember Me with truthfulness,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'ṣ-ṣidq:*

and I will remember you with sustenance.  
*adhkur-kum bi'r-rizq.*

• “Remember Me with clarity,  
*udhkurū-nī bi'ṣ-ṣafw:*

and I will remember you with pardon.  
*adhkur-kum bi'l-'afw.*

• “Remember Me with glorification,  
*udhkurū-nī bi't-ta'ẓīm:*

and I will remember you with reverential treatment.  
*adhkur-kum bi't-takrīm.*

• “Remember Me with increasing frequency,  
*udhkurū-nī bi't-takhḥīr:*

and I will remember you with deliverance and dignity.  
*adhkur-kum bi'n-najāti wa 't-tawqīr.*

• “Remember Me with abstinence from crudity  
*udhkurū-nī bi-tarki 'l-jafā:*

and I will remember you with the assurance of fulfillment.  
*adhkur-kum bi-ḥifẓi 'l-wafā.*

• “Remember Me with abstinence from error,  
*udhkurū-nī bi-tarki ’l-khaṭā:*

and I will remember you with all kinds of giving.  
*adhkur-kum bi-anwā’i ’l-aṭā.*

• “Remember Me with praise in service,  
*udhkurū-nī bi’l-ḥamdi fi ’l-khidma:*

and I will remember you with the perfection of benefit.  
*adhkur-kum bi-itmāmi ’n-ni’ma.*

• “Remember Me from where you are,  
*udhkurū-nī min ḥaithu antum:*

and I will remember you from where I am.”  
*adhkur-kum min ḥaithu Ana.*

• Allāh (Exalted is He) has told us [in the Qur’ān]:

The remembrance of Allāh is greater;  
*wa la-dhikru ’llāhi akbar:*

and Allāh knows the things you do.  
*wa ’llāhu ya’lamu mā taṣna’ūn. (29:45)*



## Concerning the importance of completing the study of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], in preparation for spiritual progress.

**T**hese are some of the sayings of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) concerning the importance of studying Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:

- You must complete your study of Islāmic jurisprudence, then you may retire [*tafaqqah thumma ’‘tazil*].<sup>137</sup>

- If someone worships Allāh without knowledge [*‘ilm*], what he does incorrectly will be more than what he does properly.

- You must carry with you the lantern of the Sacred Law [*Shar‘*] of your Lord.

- If someone puts his existing knowledge into practice, Allāh will endow him with knowledge of that which he does not know.

- You must disengage yourself from the material means [*asbāb*]. You must detach yourself from the brethren and from human beings in general. Show them the back of your heart, with a dedicated abstinence.

<sup>137</sup> Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has quoted this particular saying in many of his recorded discourses, sometimes attributing it to the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). In the Twelfth Discourse of *The Sublime Revelation* [*al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī*],\* the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) says:

O young man! Have you not heard the saying: “Study jurisprudence, then retire [*tafaqqah thumma ’‘tazil*]”? Study the external jurisprudence [*al-fiqh az-ẓāhir*], then retire to the inner jurisprudence [*al-fiqh al-bāṭin*]. Follow this outer practice until it brings you close to a knowledge you have not been applying. This outer knowledge is the light of the outer being, and the inner is the light of the inner.

(\*See p. 93 of the Al-Baz edition.)

•Your earnest endeavor and your good conduct must be for the sake of your Lord. You must be dissociated from all apart from Him, separated from all others and from the material means, and fearful of having your lanterns extinguished.

•Practice sincere devotion to your Lord for forty mornings, and the fountains of wisdom will then gush forth from your heart onto your tongue.

•While he [the devoted servant] is in that state, he will see the fire of the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him), just as Moses (peace be upon him) saw a fire emerging from the tree of his heart. He will say to his lower self [*nafs*], his passionate desire, his devil, his natural instinct, his material means, and his worldly existence:

“Wait! I have noticed a fire.”  
*umkuthū innī ānastu nāran.* (20:10)

The heart will then be summoned by a voice from the innermost being [*sirr*], saying:

“I am indeed your Lord,  
*innī Ana Rabbu-ka* (20:12)  
 therefore worship Me.  
*fa-’bud-nī.* (20:14)

“Do not humble yourself to anyone other than Me, and do not become attached to anyone other than Me. Be aware of Me, and ignore everyone other than Me. Establish contact with Me, and maintain no connection with anyone other than Me. Set out to find Me, and turn away from everyone other than Me. Move toward My knowledge, toward My nearness, toward My realm, toward My dominion, until, when the Meeting is accomplished, whatever will happen will happen.”

•His servant will then be told, by way of inspiration: “The obstacles have disappeared, the trouble has vanished, the self [*nafs*] is at peace, the gifts of grace abound, and now the instruction has arrived:

Go to Pharaoh!  
*idhhab ilā Fir‘awna.* (20:24)

“[That is to say:] ‘Return, O heart, to the lower self [*nafs*], the passionate desire [*hawā*], and the devil [*shaiṭān*]. Direct them

toward Me, and guide them toward Me. Say to them:

Follow me, and I will guide you

*ittabi'ū-ni ahdi-kum*

in the way of right conduct.

*sabīla 'r-rashād. (40:38)'''*

• You must establish connection, then become disconnected, then establish connection, then become disconnected, then establish connection.



## Concerning the practice of pious restraint [*wara'*].

These are some of the sayings of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on the subject of pious restraint [*wara'*]:

- Pious restraint [*wara'*] is the practice of approaching everything with caution, and refraining from undertaking anything without permission from the Sacred Law [*Shar'*]. If a proposed action is found to be in accordance with the Sacred Law, or a potential acquisition is found to be compatible therewith, well and good. If such is not the case, however, it is necessary to abstain.

- Pious restraint [*wara'*] falls into three distinct categories, on three different levels:

1. The pious restraint of the common people [*wara' al-'awāmm*], which means taking care to abstain from that which is strictly unlawful [*ḥarām*] and that which is of dubious legality [*shubha*].

2. The pious restraint of the élite [*wara' al-khawāṣṣ*], which means taking care to abstain from everything that excites the lustful appetite of the lower self [*nafs*] and the passions.

3. The pious restraint of the élite of the élite [*wara' khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*], which means taking care to abstain from everything that involves their self-will [*irāda*].

- Pious restraint [*wara'*] is of two kinds:

1. The external variety [*ẓāhir*], which means refraining from any physical movement, unless it is prompted by Allāh (Exalted is He).

2. The inner kind [*bāṭin*], which means that nothing must gain admission to your heart, apart from Allāh (Exalted is He).

• If a person fails to pay due attention to the subtle details of pious restraint [*wara'*], he will not receive the precious gifts that it can bring.

• In the sphere of verbal expression [*manṭiq*], pious restraint [*wara'*] is extremely demanding, and abstinence [*zuhd*] is particularly hard in the sphere of leadership [*riyāsa*].

• Abstinence [*zuhd*] is the beginning of pious restraint [*wara'*], just as moderation [*qanā'a*] is the road to contentment [*riḍā*].

• Pious restraint [*wara'*] is of special importance in matters of food and clothing. The food of the devout [*muttaqī*] is that which entails no violation of any right, pertaining either to fellow creatures or to the Sacred Law [*Shar'*], and to which no one else has any claim. As for the food of the saint [*walī*], it is that in which there is no ingredient of self-will [*irāda*]; it is purely and simply a gracious favor from Allāh (Exalted is He). If someone is unworthy of the first description, he cannot make further progress.

• That which is absolutely lawful [*ḥalāl muṭlaq*] is that which involves no sinful disobedience of Allāh, and in which Allāh (Exalted is He) is not forgotten.

• In the matter of clothing, the people [of the Lord] fall into three distinct categories:

1. The clothing of the Prophets [*Anbiyā'*] (peace be upon them all) is that which is lawful [*ḥalāl*] in the sense referred to above. It may be of linen, or cotton, or wool, or some other material.

2. The clothing of the saints [*awliyā'*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) consists of whatever the [inwardly received] command dictates. At the very least, it is that which covers the private parts, and whatever sheer necessity requires. Their freedom in this respect is due to the extinction of their passionate desires.

3. The clothing of the spiritual deputies [*budalā'*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) consists of whatever destiny [*qadar*] bestows, always in keeping with the rules [*ḥudūd*] [of the Sacred Law]. It may be a very simple garment, worth a mere carat [*qirāṭa*], or a fine suit, costing a hundred *dinārs* [gold coins]. No self-will motivates the more expensive choice, and no desire is disappointed by the cheaper option. It all depends on what the Master [*Mawlā*] sees fit to bestow.

•For pious restraint [*wara'*] to be complete, the practitioner must cultivate ten habits, imposing them on his lower self [*nafs*] as a matter of strict duty [*farīda*]:

1. Keeping the tongue from backbiting [*ghība*], in compliance with the words of Allāh (Exalted is He):

And do not backbite one another.  
*wa lā taghtab ba'du-kum ba'ḏā.* (49:12)

2. Refraining from mockery [*sukhriyya*], on account of His words (Exalted is He):

One group of people should not scoff  
*lā yaskhar qawmun*  
at another group people,  
*min qawmin*  
who may be better than they.  
*'asā an yakūnū khairan min-hum.* (49:11)

3. [?] <sup>138</sup>

4. Keeping the eyes modestly downcast in the presence of forbidden objects [*maḥārim*], in accordance with His words (Exalted is He):

Tell the believing men to lower their gaze.  
*qul li 'l-mu'minīna yaghuḏḏū min absāri-him.* (24:30)

5. Speaking with a truthful tongue, in obedience to His words (Exalted is He):

And if you give your word, you must act fairly.  
*wa idhā qultum fa-'dilū* (6:153)

—in other words, you must mean what you say.

6. He must acknowledge the gracious favor of Allāh (Exalted is He), so as not to take pride in himself, in keeping with His words (Exalted is He):

It is rather that Allāh  
*bali 'llāhu*  
is treating you with gracious favor,  
*yamunnu 'alai-kum*  
inasmuch as He has guided you to faith.  
*an hadā-kum li'l-īmāni.* (49:17)

<sup>138</sup>In a footnote on p. 64 of the printed Arabic text, the editor states that this third item is missing from the original manuscript at his disposal.

7. He must spend his wealth to further the cause of the Truth, not on the promotion of falsehood, in accordance with His words (Exalted is He):

And those who, when they spend,  
*wa 'lladhīna idhā anfaqū*  
are neither prodigal nor parsimonious.  
*lam yusrifū wa lam yaqturū. (25:67)*

—that is to say, they do not spend on sinful disobedience, nor do they withhold from worshipful obedience.

8. He must not seek high-and-mighty status and grandeur for himself, on account of His words (Exalted is He):

As for that Ultimate Abode,  
*tilka 'd-dāru 'l-ākhiratu*  
We shall assign it to those  
*naj'alu-hā li'lladhīna*  
who are neither intent  
*lā yurīdūna*  
on high-and-mighty status in the earth,  
*'uluwwan fi 'l-arḍi*  
nor on corruption.  
*wa lā fasādā. (28:83)*

9. Regular observance of the five daily ritual prayers [*ṣalawāt*] at their prescribed times, in compliance with His words (Exalted is He):

Be careful to observe your prayers,  
*ḥāfiẓū 'ala 'ṣ-ṣalawāti*  
and [especially] the middle prayer,  
*wa 'ṣ-ṣalāti 'l-wuṣṭā:*  
and stand obedient to Allāh.  
*wa qūmū li'llāhi qānīnīn. (2:238)*

10. Adherence to the Sunna [the exemplary practice of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace)] and the Community, in obedience to His words (Exalted is He):

And this path of Mine is straight, so follow it.  
*wa anna hādihā ṣirāṭī mustaqīmān fa-'ttabi'ū-h. (6:153)*

## Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir explains the reason for the difference between two apples.

**I**t was Shaikh Abu ‘l-‘Abbās al-Khaḍir al-Ḥusainī al-Mawṣilī who said: “One day, in the company of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), I witnessed the presence of al-Mustanjid-bi’llāh Abu ‘l-Muẓaffar Yūsuf, the son of the Commander of the Believers [*Amīr al-Mu’minīn*], al-Muqtafi-li-Amri’llāh Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad al-‘Abbāsī.

“He said to the Shaikh: ‘I wish to receive something from the realm of charismatic gifts [*karāmāt*].’ When the Shaikh asked him what he wished for in particular, he said: ‘Some apples from the Unseen [*Ghaib*].’ That was not the season for apples, but the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) simply stretched his hand up into the air, and lo and behold, he was holding two apples in that hand of his!

“The Shaikh gave one of them to al-Mustanjid-bi’llāh, and broke the one that was still in his own hand. The broken apple was pure white, and the fragrant aroma of musk was emanating from it. Then al-Mustanjid-bi’llāh broke the apple he was holding, and found that it contained a maggot. ‘What is wrong with this,’ asked al-Mustanjid, ‘when the one in your hand is as you can see?’ (Or he may have said, ‘as I can see.’) The Shaikh replied: ‘O Abu ‘l-Muẓaffar, that one has been touched by the hand of tyranny [*ẓulm*], so it has become worm-eaten, as you can see, whereas as this one has been touched by the hand of sainthood [*wilāya*], so it is sweet and good.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him, and with us for his sake!”



☞ In response to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's oft-repeated appeal, Allāh (Exalted is He) converts a merchant's dreadful fate into a mere dream. ☞

Shaikh Abu 's-Sa'ūd al-Ḥuraimi has informed us: "Abu 'l-Muẓaffar al-Ḥasan ibn Na'im at-Tājir [the Merchant] came to visit Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās (may Allāh be well pleased with him), at some point during the year [A.H.] 521. 'O my master,' he said, 'a caravan has been equipped for me, in readiness for the journey to Syria. It contains merchandise worth seven hundred *dinārs* [gold coins].' Shaikh Ḥammād told him: 'If you travel this year, you will be killed, and your property will be seized.'

"The merchant went out in a state of distress. He happened to meet Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who was still a young man at that time, so he told him what Shaikh Ḥammād had said to him. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir then told him: 'If you travel this year, you will go in safety, and you will return safe and sound, having made a handsome profit. That I can guarantee!'

"The merchant then traveled to Syria, where he sold his wares for a thousand *dinārs*. While in Aleppo, he went to satisfy his need in a place where liquid refreshments were available [*siqāya*]. He put the thousand *dinārs* on a shelf in that facility, and quite forgot that he had done so. When he arrived at his campsite, a drowsiness came upon him, so he fell asleep. In his dream, he saw himself in a caravan, which the Arabs had attacked and plundered, killing all the travelers. He himself had been stabbed with a lance, and the wound had been fatal.

"He woke up with a start, and noticed a trace of blood on his neck. He could also feel the pain inflicted by the stroke of the lance. He suddenly remembered his money, so he rushed back to the watering place. The money was still there on the shelf, so he picked it up, and then traveled home to Baghdād. As soon as he entered the city, he said to himself: 'I enrolled as a novice with Shaikh Ḥammād, since he is the elder, though I should have started with Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, for he is the one whose word turned out to be correct.'

"When he encountered Shaikh Ḥammād in the Sulṭān's Bazaar, the Shaikh said to him: 'O Abu 'l-Muẓaffar, receive your initiation from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, for he is a very dear man. He appealed

to Allāh on your behalf, seventeen times, until Allāh (Exalted is He) converted what He had ordained for you, so that a killing in a state of wakefulness became one experienced in a dream, and so that the actual loss of your money, along with the poverty you would have suffered as a result, became no more than a forgetful lapse in your dream.'

"Abu 'l-Muẓaffar thereupon approached Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, who said to him immediately: 'Shaikh Ḥammād has told you that I appealed to Allāh on your behalf, seventeen times. By the Might and Glory of Allāh (Exalted is He), I did appeal to Allāh on your behalf: seventeen times, and seventeen times, and seventeen times—up to a total of seventy times—until He converted what He had ordained for you, so that a killing in a state of wakefulness became one experienced in a dream, and so that the actual loss of your money became no more than a forgetful lapse in that dream of yours.'

"May Allāh be well pleased with both of those Shaikhs!"

☞ A senior Shaikh foresees a distinguished future for a young man, named 'Abd al-Qādir, who has just arrived in Baghdād. ☞

It was Shaikh 'Abd al-Laṭīf who said: "I heard my father say: 'I once heard Shaikh 'Azzāz ibn Mustawda' al-Baṭā'ihī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say:

“““A noble young Persian [*'Ajamī*] has just arrived in Baghdād. His name is 'Abd al-Qādir. He will emerge into prominence in the spiritual stations. It will soon become apparent that he is endowed with sublime charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]. He will command immediate respect, and quickly ascend to the degree of loving affection. The universe will be at his disposal, along with all that it contains, both the superior and the inferior, for the duration of his life. He has a firm footing in empowerment, by which he acquired preeminence in time immemorial [*qidam*]. He has a pure white hand in the realities, by which he acquired distinction in pre-eternity [*azal*]. He has a tongue in the presence of Allāh (Exalted, Almighty and Glorious is He), in the presence of Holiness. He is one of the lords [*arbāb*] of those ranks that have eluded many of the saints [*awliyā'*].”””

☞ A remarkable eulogy of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, reported by companions of Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī. ☞

Several of the companions of Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) are reported as having said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was mentioned in the presence of our own Shaikh, Shaikh Maṣṣūr al-Baṭā’ihī, who said: ‘There will come a time when he is sorely needed. His station will be exalted among those who know by direct experience [‘*arīfīn*]. He will die as the dearest of the people of the earth to Allāh (Exalted is He) and His Messenger in that era. If anyone among you lives long enough to meet him, let that person respect his enormous dignity, and acknowledge his tremendous importance.’”

☞ Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī appears at the side of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

Shaikh Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir has told us: “I once heard my father say: ‘I was sitting one day in the presence of Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), when I conceived the idea of paying a visit to Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī. At that very moment, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir said to me: “O Khaḍir, look, Shaikh Aḥmad is right here!” I looked, and there beside him was an awe-inspiring Shaikh, so I promptly stood up in his honor, and saluted him with the greeting of peace. ‘O Khaḍir,’ he said to me, ‘if someone can see Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, the chieftain of the saints [*awliyā*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), why should he wish to behold the likes of me? What am I, except a member of his flock?’ Then he disappeared.

“After the death of the Shaikh [‘Abd al-Qādir] (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), I went out to Umm ‘Ubaida to pay him a visit. As soon as I approached him, I recognized him as the Shaikh whom I had seen at the side of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in Baghdād. ‘O Khaḍir,’ he said to me, ‘was that first occasion not sufficient for you?’ May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

It was Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh al-Baṭā’ihī who said: “I went out to Umm ‘Ubaida during the lifetime of my master, Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir, and stayed for several days in the pavilion [*riwāq*]

of Shaikh Aḥmad (may Allāh be well pleased with him). One day, Shaikh Aḥmad said to me: ‘Tell me something about the charismatic exploits [*manāqib*] and special qualities of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.’ While I was giving him some account of these, a man came up and said to me: ‘What is going on here? Do not speak in our company about the charismatic exploits of anyone other than this,’ and he pointed toward Shaikh Aḥmad (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

“Shaikh Aḥmad gave him an angry look, and the man fell dead on the spot. Then he said: ‘Who has achieved the status of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir? That is a man who stands with the ocean of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*] to his right, and the ocean of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*] to his left, scooping out from either of the two, as he wishes. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir has no match in this time of ours.’

“I also heard Shaikh Aḥmad giving wise advice—to his sister’s sons, they being Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-A‘zab and his brothers, Abu ‘l-Faraj ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān and Najm ad-Dīn Aḥmad, the sons of Shaikh ‘Alī ar-Rifā‘ī, and to his senior companions—when a man came by to bid him farewell, before traveling to Baghdād. ‘When you get to Baghdād,’ the Shaikh told him, ‘your first priority must be to visit Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in person, if he is still alive, or to visit his tomb, if he is dead. For I have made him a solemn pledge, that if any man, of those endowed with spiritual states [*aṣḥāb al-aḥwāl*], should enter Baghdād without paying him a visit, that man will be stripped of his spiritual state [*ḥāl*], even shortly before death. How unfortunate a loss, for anyone who does not get to see him!’

“May Allāh enable us to benefit from those two Shaikhs, and may He be well pleased with them both!”

(According to the compiler of the book entitled *Rawḍ al-Abrār wa Maḥāsin al-Akhyār* [The Gardens of the Righteous and the Merits of the Best], the reporter of this story was Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh al-Yūnainī. Allāh knows best what is correct!)

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir needs a fan to cool him, even in the middle of winter. ☞

It was Ibn al-Khaḍīr who said: “Whenever I entered the presence of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in the middle of winter, when it was bitterly cold, I used to find

him with a single shirt on his back, and a cotton skullcap [*tāqiyya*] on his head. The sweat would be dripping from his body, and he would have someone beside him, waving a fan to keep him cool, just as he did in the hottest season.”

☞ A Shaikh explains why Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is the chieftain of the people of his age. ☞

The virtuous Shaikh Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anṣārī al-Khaṭīb [the Preacher] has informed us: “I once heard Shaikh Abū ‘Abdu’llāh Muḥammad al-Qurashī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say: ‘I once heard Shaikh Abu ‘r-Rabi’ Sulaimān al-Māliqī say:

“““The chieftain of the people of his age is Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). The station of independence [*ghinā*] has a limit and a boundary.””

“The Shaikh [al-Qurashī] added: ‘There is tremendous knowledge in this saying, which contains the glories of subtle inner meanings. May Allāh be well pleased with him!’”

Abū Ṭāhir went on to say: “So I said to Shaikh al-Qurashī (may Allāh be well pleased with him): ‘Is Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir the chieftain of the people of his age?’ He replied: ‘Yes indeed. As for the saints [*awliyā*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them), he is the most exalted and the most perfect of them all. As for the religious scholars [*ulamā*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them), he is the most piously restrained [*awra*] and the most abstinent [*aḥḥad*] of them all. As for those who know by direct experience [*‘arifūn*], he is the most knowledgeable and the most complete of them all. As for the Shaikhs, he is the most competent and the strongest of them all.

“May Allāh be well pleased with them, each and every one, and may He be well pleased with us, on their account!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s unique status is acknowledged by al-Khiḍr (peace be upon him). ☞

When someone asked Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn ‘Abd al-Baṣrī (may Allāh be well pleased with them) about al-Khiḍr (peace be upon him),<sup>139</sup> he said: “I met him once, and I said to him: ‘Tell

<sup>139</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

me about some marvel that you have experienced, in connection with the saints [*awliyā'*].’ He responded to this by telling me:

“One day, I was passing by the beach of the Encompassing Ocean [*al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt*], at a spot where there is usually no one to be seen. I caught sight of a man who was lying there asleep, wrapped up in his cloak. It occurred to me that he must be a saint [*walī*], so I prodded him with my foot. He raised his head and asked me: ‘What do you want?’ ‘Get up,’ said I, ‘and attend to your service!’ but he said: ‘Go away and attend to yourself, O Khidr! Who do you think I am?’

“I thereupon addressed my concern to Allāh, and I said: “O my Lord, I am the superintendent of the saints [*naqīb al-awliyā'*], am I not?” I heard the reply: “You are the superintendent of those who love Us, and this is one of those whom We love.” Having learned who he was, I asked him to offer a prayer of supplication [*du‘ā'*] on my behalf, so he said: “May Allāh grant you abundant good fortune!”

“Continuing the story, al-Khidr went on to say: “Then I moved away, and lo and behold, I saw a woman on top of a sandhill, close to the sky. She was lying there asleep, wrapped up in a cloak, so I made ready to prod her with my foot. Just as I said: “This must be the wife of that [man I found sleeping],” I heard the summons: “Be on your best behavior with those whom We love!” Then she woke up, in time for the afternoon prayer [*‘aṣr*], and she exclaimed: “Praise be to Allāh, who has made me intimate with Him, and has estranged me from His creatures! She turned toward me and said: “Welcome! If only you had treated me politely in the first place, without needing a stern injunction, it would have been even better.” Then she stood up and prayed for me, just as her husband had done.”

Shaikh Abū Muḥammad went on to say: “So I asked al-Khidr: ‘Do these loved ones have a man, a sole director, to whom they turn for instruction in every age?’ ‘Yes indeed,’ he replied, so I said: ‘And who is he in this present time of ours?’ He told me: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is the sole director of the loved ones, the Cardinal Pole [*Qutb*] of the saints [*awliyā'*], and the keeper of the secret. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and with all of them!’”

Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan al-Jawṣaqī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: “My ears would have gone deaf, and my eyes would have gone blind, if I had ever seen the likes of my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).”

☞ Shaikh Khalifa sees a man sitting in the air, above the countryside, then meets him again, in the presence of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. ☞

It was Shaikh Khalifa an-Nahr-Malikī, the pupil of Shaikh Abū Sa'īd al-Qailawī (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), who said: "I once passed through the rural districts, on the outskirts of the city, and I caught sight of a figure sitting up in the air. I saluted him with the greeting of peace, and I said to him: 'How did you manage to sit in the air [*hawā'*]?' 'O Khalifa,' he replied, 'I refused to follow passionate desire [*hawā'*], and I rode on true devotion [*taqwā*], until I came to rest in the air.'"

Shaikh Khalifa then went on to say: "I came on a visit to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, at his guesthouse [*ribāṭ*], and I saw him sitting in the dome of the saints [*qubbat al-awliyā*].<sup>140</sup> That man, the one I had seen sitting in the air, was seated in front of him, in a humble posture. The man spoke to him, and asked him about certain principles concerning the realities [*ḥaqā'iq*] and esoteric forms of knowledge [*ma'ārif*]. I could not understand a thing. Then the Shaikh got up, and I was left alone with the man, so I said to him: 'I am surprised to see you here!' He responded by saying: 'Does Allāh have any chosen saint [*walī muṣṭafā*], or any loved one close to Him, who does not come here frequently and constantly?'

"Then I said to him: 'I could not understand a word of what you were saying to the Shaikh.' He said: 'Every spiritual station has its principles, every principle has various shades of meaning, and every shade of meaning has a particular mode of expression by which it is enunciated. The mode of expression is intelligible only to those who understand its meaning, the meaning can only be grasped by those who have a true mastery of wisdom, and the true mastery of wisdom is confined to those who have attained to the relevant spiritual station.'

"After hearing this explanation, I said to him: 'I have never seen anything like your attitude of humility, today, in front of Shaikh

<sup>140</sup> As explained on p. 242 above, the dome of the guesthouse became known as the dome of the saints [*qubbat al-awliyā*], because it was the place where Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) received frequent visits from the saints and the men of the Unseen [*rijāl al-Ghaib*].

‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).’ To this he responded: ‘How could I not behave humbly toward someone who has commissioned me, and has assigned me a managerial task?’ When I asked him: ‘What has he commissioned you to undertake, and what has he authorized you to manage?’ he explained: ‘He has charged me with the supervision of a hundred invisible beings, dwelling in the air. No one can see them, except those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) wills, and to whom He grants permission.’ Then he recited [from the Qur’ān]:

We do not come down  
*wa mā natanazzalu*  
 except by your Lord’s commandment.  
*illā bi-amri Rabbi-k:*  
 To Him belongs all that is before us  
*la-hu mā baina aidī-nā*  
 and all that is behind us  
*wa mā khalfā-nā*  
 and whatever is in between.  
*wa mā baina dhālik. (19:64)*

“The Shaikh has also entrusted me with the management of their spiritual states, by the application of constriction [*qabḍ*] and expansion [*bast*].”

It was the abovementioned Shaikh Khalīfa (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was invested with authority over the saints [*awliyā’*] and their innermost beings [*asrār*]. He had only to glance toward any quarter of the earth, to the farthest point on the earth, whether eastward or westward, and the inhabitants of that region would be afraid. They were in awe of him, and in awe of his gaze, hoping for improvement in their spiritual states, through the blessing of his gaze, and fearing the deprivation of their spiritual states, through the impact of his awesome dignity.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him, and with all of them!”



☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's anger sets the whole of Baghdād ablaze. ☞

It was Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū an-Nahr-Malikī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: "Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh arrived, accompanied by a young man. He entered the presence of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) and said to him: 'O my master, offer a prayer of supplication for this young man, for he is my son!' He was not his son, however, and he had something improper on his conscience, so Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir grew angry and cried: 'It has gone far enough, the way you all treat me!'"

"Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir got up and withdrew to his private apartment, and fires immediately broke out in all the districts of Baghdād. As soon as the flames were extinguished in one place, fire would flare up in another spot. I could see calamity descending on Baghdād, like a cloudburst, and all because of the anger of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). I made haste to enter his presence, and found him in his state of wrath, so I sat down and said: 'O my master, take pity on your fellow creatures, for the people are facing destruction!' His anger subsided, and I realized that the calamity had been averted, for all the fires had instantly been extinguished.

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir holds the hearts of the people in his hand. ☞

Shaikh 'Abd al-Bazzāz has told us: "One Friday, together with my master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), I set out for the congregational mosque [jāmi']. No one saluted him with the greeting of peace, so I said to myself: 'Every normal Friday, we find it hard to get through to the mosque, due to the crowds that gather around the Shaikh, so what is happening today?' I had barely finished putting my thought into words, before people came rushing up to salute him with the greeting of peace. He looked at me with a smile, so I said to myself: 'This state of affairs is better than that state of affairs!' Even before this notion had occurred to me, however, he turned to me and said: 'O 'Umar, this is what you wanted! Do you

not realize that the hearts of the people are in my hand? If I wish, I move them away from me, and if I wish, I attract them toward me.’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is deeply moved by the recitation of ash-Sharīf al-Muqri [the Qur’ān-reciter]. ☞

It was ash-Sharīf Abu ‘l-Faṭḥ al-Hāshimī al-Muqri [the Qur’ān-reciter] who said: “Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) called upon me to give a Qur’ānic recitation, and as soon as I started to recite, he began to weep. ‘By Allāh,’ he said, ‘I shall ask Allāh to make you my own!’ Up stood a man—he was one of the saints [*awliyā*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them all)—and said to him: ‘O my master, I saw the Lord of Might (Glory be to Him, and Exalted is He) in my dream. The gates of the Garden of Paradise had been opened wide, and a lectern had been set in place for you. You were told to deliver a speech, but you said: “Only when the noble Qur’ān-reciter is present!” “He is present already,” said a voice, so you said: “Now I shall speak!”’

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ When Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s turban unravels,  
a spiritual sister drops her headcloth,  
in faraway Iṣfahān. ☞

The enlightened Shaikh Abu ‘l-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Jahnī has informed us: “I was sitting below the lectern of Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and the superintendents [*nuqabā*] were sitting on the stairs leading up to the lectern. There were two of them on each stair, except the first, which was occupied by someone experiencing a spiritual state. The men beneath his lectern were crouching in awe, as if they were lions.

“At one point, the Shaikh was so engrossed in what was arising within him, up there on the lectern, that he failed to notice when a pleat from his turban became unfurled. The people in the audience

reacted by discarding their turbans and their cotton skullcaps. As soon as he had finished his lecture, the Shaikh readjusted his turban, and said to me: 'O Abu 'l-Qāsim, see to it that the people get their turbans and skullcaps back!' I did as I was told, but I was left holding a headcloth. I had no idea to whom it belonged, and no one at the session still had anything missing. The Shaikh said: 'Give it to me,' so I handed it to him. He placed it on his right shoulder, but the next time I looked, I did not see it there.

"This left me feeling puzzled, until the Shaikh stepped down from the lectern, leaned against my shoulder, and said: 'O Abu 'l-Qāsim, at the very moment when the people in the audience dropped their turbans, a sister of ours, in Iṣfahān, dropped her headcloth. Then, once you had given everything back to the people here, and I had placed the headcloth on my shoulder, she stretched out her hand, all the way from Iṣfahān, and picked it up.'

"May Allāh be well pleased with him, and with her!"

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir transforms  
his wife's candlelight. ☞

We owe this next report to the learned Imām, Shaikh 'Abd al-Jabbār, the son of our master Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with them both). He said:

"Whenever my mother went into a dark place, a candle would shine for her, so that she could see by its light. But then my father came into her room, and noticed the candle. As soon as his gaze fell upon it, its light was extinguished. He said to her: 'This light is a devil [*shaiṭān*]. It used to serve you, but now I have chased it away from you, and replaced it with a Divine light [*nūr Raḥmānī*]. I do the same for everyone who is spiritually affiliated to me, or whom I regard as being in my care.' From then on, in any place my mother entered, she would see a light like the light of the moon, making the place bright for her.

"May Allāh be well pleased with my parents!"

☞ A call to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, from out in the desert, brings four stray camels back to their owner. ☞

‘Abdu’llāh al-Jubbā’i has told us: “In Hamadān, I once met a man from Damascus, whose name was Ṭarīf. He said: ‘I met Bishr al-Mifraḍī on the Nishāpūr road, and he had fourteen loads of sugar with him. He said to me: “We made camp in an empty desert, a frightening place, in which a man feels too scared to attend to his own brother. When the camels were loaded, in the first part of the night, four of the laden camels went missing, so I set out to look for them. I could not find them anywhere, so I decided to leave the caravan, and the camel driver chose to stick with me.

““Then, as soon as the dawn broke, I remembered Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and how he used to tell me: ‘If you ever fall into dire straits, call out to me, for your problem will quickly disappear.’ On the strength of this recollection, I said: ‘O ‘Abd al-Qādir, my camels have gone astray!’ Then I looked toward the rising light of dawn, and I saw a man on a hill. He was dressed in a white gown, and he was signaling to me with his sleeve. I climbed the hill, but found no one there. Then I caught sight of four camels, complete with their loads, kneeling at the bottom of the hill. I promptly took charge of them, and we rejoined the caravan.””

☞ An airborne visitor swoops down like an eagle to salute Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir with the greeting of peace. ☞

It was Abu ‘l-Ghanā’im al-Ḥusainī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said: “I was up on the roof of the schoolhouse of our Shaikh, Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir, between the prayers of sunset [*maghrib*] and late evening [*‘ishā’*]. It was summertime, and I was lying at ease on my back. My master the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was in front of me on the roof, facing the *Qibla* [direction of the Ka‘ba in Mecca]. Up in the atmosphere, I caught sight of a man, as he moved through the air at the speed of an arrow. He had a fine turban on his head, with a tassel hanging down between his shoulders. He was dressed in a white gown, with a wrapper around his waist. “When he drew near

to the head of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), he swooped down like an eagle on its prey, until he alighted in front of the Shaikh and saluted him with the greeting of peace. Then he went off into the air, until he disappeared from my sight. At that point, I stood up and kissed the Shaikh's hand. When I asked him about the airborne visitor, he told me: 'He is one of those men of the Unseen [*Ghaib*], who are constantly traveling on their rounds. May the peace of Allāh be upon them, as well as His mercy, His blessings, and the purest of His salutations!'

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir recovers a pair  
of wooden clogs. ☞

The two Shaikhs, Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān aṣ-Ṣirāfinī and Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Ḥuraimī, have informed us:

"We were together in the company of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), at his schoolhouse, on Sunday the 3rd of Ṣafar in the year [A.H.] 555. While we were there, the Shaikh got up and performed the ablution for the ritual prayer [*tawadda' a li'ṣ-ṣalāt*], wearing high wooden clogs [*qabqāb*] [to keep his feet from getting muddy]. He performed two cycles of prayer [*rak'atain*], and then, as soon as he had pronounced the final salutation,<sup>141</sup> he uttered a tremendous shout. He grabbed one of the clogs, and hurled into the air, so far that we lost sight of it. Then he uttered another shout, and threw the other clog, so that it also disappeared from our view. Then he sat down, but neither of us dared ask him what that was all about.

"Twenty-three days later, a caravan arrived from Persia, and the newcomers said: 'We have brought with us an votive offering for the Shaikh.' At their request, we asked the Shaikh to receive them, and he permitted them to present their offering. 'Accept it from them,' he told us, so they gave us a gown made of silk, or of silk and fur, some gold—and the pair of clogs that the Shaikh had thrown away! When we asked them: 'Where on earth did you find these clogs?' they said: 'While we were traveling along, on Sunday the 3rd of Ṣafar, some Arabs launched a raid against us, led by two chieftains. They

<sup>141</sup> See note 82 on p. 141 above.

plundered our goods, and killed several of our number. Then they went down into a valley, where they divided our goods amongst them.

“At that point, we said to one another: “Suppose we were to dedicate some part of our goods, right here and now, as an offering to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), if he would rescue us....” We had scarcely finished speaking these words, remembering him, and dedicating something to him, when we heard two tremendous shouts, echoing throughout the valley. We could see that those Arabs were terrified, and we thought that someone had come to arrest them. Some of them approached us, and said: “Come and take your goods, and see what has alarmed us!” They led us to their chieftains, and we discovered that both of them were dead. Next to each of the corpses, we noticed one of a pair of clogs, wet with water. Then they returned all our goods to us, and told us: “This affair has enormous significance for us!”

“May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!”

☞ A noisy bird disturbs Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s audience. ☞

It was the exemplary guide, Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Qā’id al-Awānī, who said: “A kite [*hid’a*] once flew by, while Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was holding his regular public session [*majlis*], on a very windy day. It was disturbing the audience with its squawking, so the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) exclaimed: ‘O wind, blow the head off this kite!’ The bird immediately dropped down dead, with its head and its body falling in different directions. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then stepped down from the lectern. Taking the kite’s head in one hand, and passing his other hand over it, he said: ‘In the name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate [*Bismi’llāhi ’r-Raḥmāni ’r-Raḥīm*].’ By Allāh’s leave (Exalted is He), it came alive at once, and flew away. This all happened in full view of the people present.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ As a young man on Pilgrimage, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir meets up with Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir, then the two of them encounter a young Abyssinian woman. ☞

[Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Qā’id al-Awānī also said]: “Our master, our Shaikh, and our exemplary guide to Allāh (Exalted is He), Shaikh Muḥyi’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), once told us:

“The first time I set out to perform the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*] from Baghdād, while I was still a young man, I traveled some distance alone, all by myself. Then, when I came near to the lighthouse [*manāra*] known as Umm al-Qurūn, I met Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who was then a young man like myself, and who was also traveling alone. We became a pair of fellow travelers, and continued our journey together.

“Somewhere along the road, we encountered a young Abyssinian woman, of slender build, who was wearing a veil. She stood in front of me, stared me in the face, and said: “Where are you from, young man?” “From Baghdād,” said I, “though I am a Persian by birth.” She then went on to say: “You have put me to a lot of trouble today!” When he asked her to explain, she said: “A short while ago, when I was in the land of Abyssinia [*Ḥabasha*], I witnessed Allāh (Exalted is He) upon your heart, and I saw that He has endowed you with His gracious favor, to a greater extent than He has bestowed it on anyone else, so far as I am aware. This made me eager to get to know you.”

“Then she said: “Today I am going to keep you both company, and I shall break fast with the pair of you tonight.” We responded by saying: “We shall gladly treat you with affection and honor!” She then started walking along one side of the river bed [*wādī*], while we walked on the other side. When the time of the time of the sunset prayer [*maghrib*] arrived, and eating became lawful, we suddenly beheld a platter of food, descending from the air above us. As soon as it had settled down in front of us, we discovered that it contained six loaves of bread, some vinegar and some vegetables. She said: “Praise be to Allāh, who has honored me, and honored my guest as he deserves! Each night, two loaves of bread come down to me, but six loaves have come down tonight, in honor of my guests.” We ate

two loaves apiece, then, after we had finished eating, flasks of water came down to us. We drank from them, and the water we drank could not be matched, in delicious taste and sweetness, by any water on earth. Then she went away and left us, disappearing into the night.’

“We eventually arrived in Mecca the Ennobled, [and performed the rites of Pilgrimage]. While we were performing the circumambulation [*ṭawāf*] [of the Ka‘ba], Allāh (Exalted is He) blessed Shaikh ‘Adī with such experiences of His radiant lights, that he fell into a deep coma, and anyone would have said that he had died. Then, lo and behold, that young woman was standing there, massaging his head and saying to him: “May He restore you to life, the One who caused you to die! Glory be to Him, for nothing results from the manifestation of His Majesty without His confirmation, and nothing becomes established through the appearance of His attributes without His assistance. What actually happens is that the glories of His Holiness dazzle the eyes of the faculties of intellect, and the splendors of His Beauty seize the inner feelings of the men of valor.”

“Then Allāh (Exalted is He and to Him belongs all praise) blessed me with an experience of His radiant lights, in the course of the circumambulation [*ṭawāf*], and I heard a voice from my inner being [*bāṭin*], which told me what it told me. At the end of its discourse, it said to me: “O ‘Abd al-Qādir, you must abandon outer detachment [*tajrīd ṣāḥir*]. Make a constant practice of the inner isolation [*tafrīd*] that comes from the affirmation of Oneness [*tawḥīd*], and the detachment of isolation, for then We shall show you a wonder among Our signs [*min āyāti-nā ‘ajabā*]. You must not liken Our purpose to your own purpose. You must plant your foot firmly in Our presence. You must not regard any power of disposition [*taṣrīf*], in the whole realm of existence, as belonging to anyone or anything apart from Us. Direct witnessing of Us will then become a permanent experience for you. You must hold sessions for the benefit of the people, for We have a privileged élite from among Our servants, whom We shall bring in contact with Our nearness, by means of you.”

“The young woman said to me: “O young man, I wonder how you are today! A tent of light has been pitched over us, and the angels (peace be upon them) are circling around you, up to the clouds in the

sky. The eyes of the saints [*awliyā'*] are fixed upon you, in their stations. Hopes have been extended, reaching out for the like of what you have been given." Then she moved away and disappeared from view. I have never seen her again.'

"May Allāh be well pleased with them all!"

☞ A glance from Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir enables a pupil to experience the spiritual poverty he seeks. ☞

It was Shaikh Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ ibn Wirjān az-Zakālī who said: "My master, Shaikh Abū Madyan (may Allāh be well pleased with him) told me: 'You must travel to Baghdād, and go to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, so that he can teach you the practice of spiritual poverty [*faqr*].' I obediently traveled to Baghdād, and when I set eyes on the Shaikh, I saw a man of greater dignity than I had ever seen. For twenty days, he made me sit in the secluded chamber by his doorway. Then he came in to see me, and said: 'O Ṣāliḥ, look over here!' He pointed toward the *Qibla* [direction of the Ka'ba in Mecca], and said: 'What do you see?' When I said: 'I see the Ka'ba,' he said: 'Look over here!' He pointed toward the West, so I looked in that direction. 'What do you see?' he asked, so I replied: 'I see my Shaikh, Abū Madyan.'

"Then he said: 'Where do you intend to go from here, to the Ka'ba, or to the West?' I said: 'To my Shaikh, Abū Madyan, of course!' He said: 'In a single stride, or as you came here?' When I replied: 'As I came here, of course!' he said: 'That is more appropriate.' Then he said to me: 'O Ṣāliḥ, if you wish for spiritual poverty, you will never obtain it, unless you climb its ladder, and its ladder is the affirmation of Oneness [*tawḥīd*]. The foundation of the affirmation of Oneness is the obliteration of all traces of novel phenomena [*muḥdathāt*], with the essence of the innermost being [*sirr*].' 'O my master,' I said, 'I wish that you would help me to achieve that qualification!' He gave me a glance, and the forces of self-will were immediately dispelled from my heart, just as the darkness of the night is dispelled by the onset of the day. By that glance, I came to be impoverished.

"May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

☞ One of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s pupils experiences a lasting enlightenment, when a cat falls out of nowhere. ☞

Shaikh ‘Umar al-Bazzāz has told us: “Once, while I was sitting in the presence of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), in his private chamber, he said to me: ‘O my dear son, guard my back for me, in case the cat falls down on it!’ I said to myself: ‘How could the cat get in here, since there is no skylight in the roof?’ I had hardly finished my sentence, when a cat landed on my back. The Shaikh tapped his hand on my breast, and a light shone in my heart, as brightly as the sun. I discovered the Truth [*Ḥaqq*] at that very moment, and I am better off to this day, because of that light.”



## How Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir responded to questions on various important topics.

Concerning Divinely-inspired receivings [*mawārid Ilāhiyya*] and satanic insinuations [*ṭawāriq shaitāniyya*].

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked to explain the distinctive characteristics of Divinely-inspired receivings [*mawārid Ilāhiyya*] and satanic insinuations [*ṭawāriq shaitāniyya*]. He replied:

“The Divinely-inspired receiving comes only in response to an appeal [*istid‘ā’*]. It does not go away because of any intervening cause [*sabab*]. It does not come in one particular mode [*namaṭ*], nor at any specific time. As for the satanic insinuation [*ṭāriq shaitānī*], it is contrary to that in all respects.”

•Concerning love [*maḥabba*].

When asked about love [*maḥabba*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said: “It is a disturbance [*tashwīsh*] that affects the heart. It is inspired by the Beloved [*Maḥbūb*], by contrast with Whom this world comes to be like the ring of a seal, or a funeral wake. Love is an intoxication that has no corresponding sobriety. It is total devotion to the Beloved, in every respect, both in private and in public, with a self-effacing predilection. It is a natural impulse, not an affectation.

“Love is blindness to everything other than Beloved, due to solicitude for Him. It is also blindness to the Beloved Himself, due to a profound respect for Him. It is therefore total blindness. Lovers [*muḥibbūn*] are too drunk to get sober, except through direct vision of the Beloved. They are too sick to be cured, except by the sight of the One they seek. They are too distressed to be consoled, except by

their Master [Mawlā]. They can find no refuge, except in the remembrance of Him. They do not respond to anyone, except to His summoner.

“As Majnūn [the crazy lover of] Laylā<sup>142</sup> put it:

My relatives all blame me for loving Laylā:  
my brother, my cousins, my aunt....”<sup>143</sup>

(The rest of the verses are well known, so there is no need to spell them out here.)

•Concerning the realization of Divine Oneness [*tawhīd*].

When the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked about the realization of Divine Oneness [*tawhīd*], he said:

“[It is signified by] the indications of the secret of consciences [*ḍamā’ir*], and of the hidden content of the secret of the innermost beings [*sarā’ir*], at the advent of the Divine Presence [*Ḥaḍra*]. [It is signified by] the passage of the heart beyond the ultimate boundary of thoughts, its elevation to the highest degrees of connection [*wiṣāl*], its penetration of the veils of glorification, its progress toward nearness on the feet of detachment, its advance toward proximity with the effort of singular devotion, in combination with the annihilation of the two realms of being, the vacating of the two domains [this world and the Hereafter], the removal of the two sandals, the acquisition of the two lights, and the extinction of all the worlds beneath the radiance of the lights of the brilliant flashes of disclosure, without previous intention.”

•Concerning detachment [*tajrīd*].

In answer to a question concerning detachment [*tajrīd*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is the detachment of the innermost being [*sirr*] from the consideration of ways and means [*tadabbur*], by steadily restraining it from pursuit of the object of desire, by stripping it bare, then clothing its nakedness with the assurance of freedom from restriction, and by returning from the creation [*khalq*] to the Truth [*Ḥaqq*], in a state of repentance.”

<sup>142</sup> See note 23 on p. 52 above.

<sup>143</sup> *la-qad lāma-nī fī ḥubbi Lailā aqāribī—akhī wa ’bnu ’ammī wa ’bnu khālī wa khālīyā*. Literally, “...my brother, my paternal cousin, my maternal cousin, and my maternal aunt.”

•Concerning direct knowledge [*maʿrifa*].

When the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked about knowledge acquired by direct experience [*maʿrifa*], he said:

“It is insight into the meanings of the secrets of the hiding places of the mysteries, and recognition of the visible signs of the Lord of Truth [*Ḥaqq*] in everything that exists, by viewing every element thereof in the light of the meanings of His Uniqueness [*Waḥdāniyya*]. It is the acquisition of the knowledge of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*] in the extinction of every transitory being, when the Everlasting [*Bāqī*] points toward it with the sign of the awe-inspiring dignity of Lordship [*Rubūbiyya*]. It is recognition of the trace of perpetuity [*baqāʾ*] in what the Everlasting [*Bāqī*] has indicated, in the light of the majesty of Divinity [*Ilāhiyya*], by looking with the eye of the heart.”

•Concerning spiritual aspiration [*himma*].

When someone asked him about spiritual aspiration [*himma*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It means that the aspirant becomes completely naked, in every part of his being. In the case of his lower self [*nafs*], it is stripped of the love of this world. In the case of his spirit [*rūḥ*], it is stripped of attachment to the Hereafter. In the case of his heart [*qalb*], it is stripped of any will that competes with the Will of the Master [*Mawlā*]. As for his innermost being [*sirr*], it is detached from paying the slightest attention to the created universe, even with a quick peep or a glance.”

•Concerning Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*].

In response to a question concerning Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is that which cannot be negated by its opposite, and against which no contradiction can be sustained. Its opposites are simply annihilated by the evidence it presents, and its contradictions are rendered null and void by its consistency.”

•Concerning the highest of all the degrees of Divine remembrance [*dhikr*].

When the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked about the highest of all the degrees of Divine remembrance [*dhikr*], he said:

“It is that which impresses the heart, by command of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) at the moment of His choice, with the perpetuity of everlasting providence [*‘ināya*]. This remembrance [*dhikr*] is permanent, persistent and enduring. No trace of forgetfulness impairs it, and no heedlessness disturbs it, for the feelings, instincts and thoughts are all involved in the act of remembering. This is the frequent remembrance [*dhikr kathīr*] referred to by the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him, and Exalted is He) in His revelation.<sup>144</sup> The best kind of remembrance is that which is prompted by the signals received from the All-Compelling Sovereign [*al-Malik al-Jabbār*], in the recesses of our innermost beings [*asrār*].”

•Concerning ardent yearning [*shawq*].

When someone asked him about ardent yearning [*shawq*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“The best of all ardent yearnings [*ashwāq*] is that which is stimulated by witnessing [*mushāhada*], for it never wearies of meeting, never tires of telling, never flags because of closeness, and never fades because of intimacy. On the contrary, the more the contact is experienced, the more ardent the yearning becomes.

“Ardent yearning cannot be truly authentic, until it is completely stripped of its deficiencies: namely, the influence of an underlying motive, the pursuit of an ambitious desire, or the protection of a selfish interest. It thus becomes an ardent yearning stripped of all secondary causes [*asbāb*]. The person concerned has no idea what makes him feel the way he feels, because he is always witnessing the object of his yearning, yet he still yearns for the witnessing thereof, however much that witnessing is experienced.”

<sup>144</sup> This is an allusion to the Qur’ānic verse [*āya*]:

O you who believe, remember Allāh  
*yā ayyuha ‘lladhīna āmanu ‘dhkuru ‘llāha*  
 with frequent remembrance.  
*dhikran kathīrā. (33:41)*

•Concerning absolute trust [*tawakkul*].

When someone asked him about absolute trust [*tawakkul*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is the preoccupation of the innermost being [*sirr*] with Allāh (Exalted is He), to the exclusion of any other than Him. When someone puts all his trust in the Lord, he forgets whatever he used to rely on, for His sake, and depends on Him entirely, to the exclusion of all apart from Him. He thereby ascends from the shame of nonentity [*fanāʾ*] to the state of absolute trust.

“Absolute trust [*tawakkul*] is the raising of the glance of the eye of direct perception [*maʿrifa*], by the innermost being [*sirr*], toward the hidden mystery of things decreed by destiny [*maqdūrāt*]. It is the firm belief, based on the reality of certainty [*ḥaqīqat al-yaqīn*], in the concepts grasped by the methods of direct perception, because they are sealed [with the stamp of Truth], and therefore immune to the opposite of certainty.”

In answer to another question concerning absolute trust [*tawakkul*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“Absolute trust [*tawakkul*] is a reality [*ḥaqīqa*] like the reality of sincere devotion [*ikhhlās*]. The reality of sincere devotion is the transfer of the aspiration [*himma*] from the rewards [obtained by deeds] to the deeds [themselves]. The same is true of absolute trust, since it is the abandonment of personal power and strength, in favor of reliance on the Lord of lords [*Rabb al-ʿarbāb*] (Glory be to Him, and Exalted is He).”

Then he went on to say (may Allāh be well pleased with him): “O young man! How often you are spoken to, but do not hear! How often you hear, but fail to understand! How often you understand, but do not take action! How often you take action, but do not act sincerely, and do not become immersed in your sincere devotion, with your whole being!”

•Concerning contrition [*ināba*].

When the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked about contrition [*ināba*], he said:

“Contrition is the effort to pass beyond the intermediate stations, and to beware of halting on the ascending stages; then to advance to

the highest of the hidden levels, and to focus the aspirations on the occurrence of the sessions of the Presence [*majālis al-Ḥaḍra*]; then to return entirely to the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him, and Exalted is He), after being present in the place of Presence, and witnessing this confrontation [*muḥāḍara*]. Contrition [*ināba*] means returning to Him from Him, for safety's sake [*ḥadharan*], and returning to Him from everything other than Him, in hopeful anticipation [*raghaban*], and returning to Him from every attachment, in fearful apprehension [*rahaban*].”

•Concerning repentance [*tawba*].

When someone asked him about repentance [*tawba*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“Repentance is the process whereby the Lord of Truth (Exalted is He) looks toward His ancient and predestined providence [*‘ināya*] for His servant, directs that providence toward His servant’s heart, and tenderly detaches it, by attracting it toward Him and grasping it. When this takes place, the heart is drawn toward Him, away from corrupt ambition. The spirit obediently complies, the heart and the mind follow suit, repentance [*tawba*] is truly accomplished, and the whole affair becomes proper to Allāh (Exalted is He).”

•Concerning this world [*ad-dunyā*].

In response to a question concerning this world [*ad-dunyā*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

“Evict it from your heart into your hand, so that it cannot beguile you.”

•Concerning weeping [*bukā’*].

When the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked about weeping [*bukā’*], he said:

“Weep for Him, weep because of Him, and weep over Him.”

•Concerning Ṣūfism [*taṣawwuf*].

When someone asked him about Ṣūfism [*taṣawwuf*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“The Ṣūfi is someone who makes that which the Lord of Truth wishes from him the object of his own wish. He renounces this

world, so it serves him, and his allotted shares [*aqsām*] coincide with his needs. He achieves his purpose in this world, before the Hereafter, for his well-being is ensured by his Lord.”

•Concerning the difference between exultation [*ta‘azzuz*] and arrogance [*takabbur*].

When the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked to explain the difference between sheer exultation [*ta‘azzuz*] and boastful arrogance [*takabbur*], he said:

“Sheer exultation [*ta‘azzuz*] is taking pride for the sake of Allāh, and in Allāh. It entails the abasement of the lower self [*nafs*] and the raising of the aspiration [*himma*] toward (Exalted is He). As for boastful arrogance [*takabbur*], it is taking pride for the sake of the lower self, and in passionate desire. It entails the excitement of natural instinct, and the predominance of self-will, instead of respect for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Natural pride is so much easier than pride that must be earned.”

•Concerning thankfulness [*shukr*].

When someone asked him about thankfulness [*shukr*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:<sup>145</sup>

“The true nature of thankfulness [*ḥaqīqat ash-shukr*] is the acknowledgment of the benefaction of the Benefactor [*ni‘mat al-Mun‘im*], with an attitude of humility, an overt recognition of the blessing, and a reverential confession of one’s inability to give adequate thanks. Thankfulness can be subdivided into several categories, namely:

1. Thankfulness expressed by the tongue [*shukr al-lisān*]. This constitutes the acknowledgment of the benefaction [*ni‘ma*] with an attitude of humble acceptance [*istikāna*].

2. Thankfulness expressed by the body and the limbs [*shukr bi’l-badan wa ’l-arkān*]. This is the characteristic indication of loyalty and readiness to serve [*al-wafā’ wa ’l-khidma*].

3. Thankfulness expressed by the inner feeling [*shukr bi’l-qalb*]. This requires a careful balance between the visible display of appreciation and the constant preservation of a sense of reverence.

<sup>145</sup> Some of these sayings of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on the subject of thankfulness [*shukr*] are also to be found in the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. (See Vol. 5, pp. 135–9, of the Al-Baz edition.)

“Beyond this stage, thankfulness passes from the realm of the visible to the realm of the invisible [*ghaiba*], where the focus of attention is the Benefactor [*Mun‘im*], rather than the benefaction [*ni‘ma*].

“The person who is simply thankful [*shākir*] is someone who gives thanks for what is available [*mawjūd*], while the person who is very thankful [*shakūr*] is someone who gives thanks for what is unavailable [*mafqūd*].

“The person who gives praise [*hāmid*] is someone who regards withholding as a gift, and views harm as a benefit, and in whose sight the two qualities eventually become equal.

“The glory [*majd*] that exhausts all expressions of praise [*maḥāmid*] is the witnessing of perfection [*kamāl*], in the quality of Beauty [*Jamāl*] and the attribute of Majesty [*Jalāl*], with the eye of direct perception, on the carpet of nearness [to the Lord].”

• Concerning patience [*ṣabr*].

In response to a question concerning patience [*ṣabr*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:<sup>146</sup>

“Patience [*ṣabr*] means coping with misfortune by remaining on your best behavior. It means welcoming His decrees, and accepting them in accordance with the statutes [*aḥkām*] of the Book and the Sunna.

Patience [*ṣabr*] can be subdivided into several categories, namely:

1. Patience for the sake of Allāh [*ṣabr li’llāh*] (Exalted is He). This is the kind of patience [*ṣabr*] that is exercised in the course of carrying out His commandments and respectfully observing His prohibitions.

2. Patience in bearing with Allāh [*ṣabr ma‘a’llāh*] (Exalted is He). This is the kind of patience [*ṣabr*] that is exercised by calmly enduring the effects of His decree and His actions within you, and by demonstrating indifference to the advent of poverty, without a scowl or a frown.

3. Patience in anticipation of Allāh [*ṣabr ‘ala’llāh*] (Exalted is He). This is the kind of patience [*ṣabr*] that is exercised through steadfast

<sup>146</sup> Some of these sayings of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on the subject of patience [*ṣabr*] are also to be found in the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. (See Vol. 5, pp. 140–4, of the Al-Baz edition.)

reliance on that which He has promised, and that which He has threatened, in all things.

“The journey from this world to the Hereafter should be easy for the true believer [*mu'min*], but separation from creatures, even for love of the Truth, is difficult. The journey from what is known by hearsay [*naqlī*] to [the direct experience of] Allāh (Exalted is He) is very hard, and patience in bearing with Allāh [*ṣabr ma'a'llāh*] is even more difficult.

“The patient pauper is worthier than the grateful rich man, and the grateful pauper is worthier than either. As for the pauper who is both patient and thankful, he is worthier than any of them.

“No one courts misfortune, with the exception of him who knows its spiritual reward.”

•Concerning goodness of moral character [*ḥusn al-khulq*].<sup>147</sup>

When someone asked him about goodness of moral character [*ḥusn al-khulq*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“What it signifies is that you are not affected by the rudeness of creatures [*khalq*], once you have become acquainted with the Truth [*Ḥaqq*]. It means that you belittle your own lower self [*nafs*] and whatever arises from it, in full recognition of its faults. It means that you honor your fellow creatures, and what arises from them, by showing respect for what has been entrusted to them, in the way of faith and wisdom. That is the most excellent of all the virtues of the servant [of the Lord], and the jewels of the men of valor become manifest therein.”

•Concerning acceptance [*akhdh*] and rejection [*radd*].

When the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was asked about the acceptance and rejection [of gifts and opportunities], he said:

“So long as passionate desire is present, voluntary acceptance is an act of wilfulness and discord. In the absence of passionate desire, on the other hand, acceptance is an act of compliance and concord, to refrain from which would amount to ostentation [*riyā'*] and hypocrisy [*nifāq*].”

<sup>147</sup> See note 9 on p. 30 above.

•Concerning truthfulness [*ṣidq*].<sup>148</sup>

When someone asked him about truthfulness [*ṣidq*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“There is truthfulness in words, and there is truthfulness in deeds, provided they are exposed to examination by the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him, and Exalted is He). As for truthfulness in spiritual states, it is practiced by presenting to the Truth all the notions [*khawāṭir*] that occur, so that no outside influence can confuse them, and no remnant of doubt can challenge them.”

•Concerning personal extinction [*fanāʾ*].<sup>149</sup>

In response to a question concerning personal extinction [*fanāʾ*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is experienced when the Lord of Truth discloses Himself to the innermost being [*sirr*] of His saint [*walī*], with a most immediate manifestation [*tajallī*]. Under the impact of that demonstration, the whole universe is annihilated, and the saint [*walī*] becomes extinct. The extinction [*fanāʾ*] he thereby undergoes is actually his survival in perpetuity [*baqāʾ*], but he will only survive under the direction of the Everlasting One [*Bāqī*], for it is He who has rendered him extinct, and it is He who has granted him perpetual existence.”

•Concerning survival in perpetuity [*baqāʾ*].

When someone asked the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) about survival in perpetuity [*baqāʾ*], he said:

“It comes about only through the Meeting that is not accompanied by extinction [*fanāʾ*], nor by separation. This only happens like the twinkling of the eye, or even more immediately. The mark of the people of perpetuity [*ahl al-baqāʾ*] is that nothing accompanies them in that capacity, because the two are opposites.”

•Concerning fulfillment of duty [*wafāʾ*].

In answer to a question concerning fulfillment of duty [*wafāʾ*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is careful attention to the rights [*ḥuqūq*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), even in deprivation, strict observance of the limits [*ḥudūd*] set

<sup>148</sup> See note 7 on p. 32 above.

<sup>149</sup> For more sayings by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on the subject of personal extinction [*fanāʾ*], see pp. 256–57 above.

by Allāh (Exalted is He), in word and in deed, and making haste to earn His good pleasure, in every situation, both in privately and in public.”

•Concerning contentment [*riḍā*].<sup>150</sup>

When someone asked the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) about contentment [*riḍā*], he said:

“It is the removal of the desire for favorable attention, satisfaction with whatever has been predestined in the foreknowledge of Allāh (Exalted is He) in His eternity-without-beginning [*azal*], and contentment [*riḍā*] with what has been foreordained in destiny’s decree [*qadar*].”

•Concerning self-will [*irāda*].

In response to a question concerning self-will [*irāda*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is the repetition of thought [*fikr*] within the heart [*fu’ād*].”

•Concerning Divine providence [*ināya*].

When someone asked him about Divine providence [*ināya*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is sempiternal [*azaliyya*], for it is one of the Attributes [*Ṣifāt*] of Allāh (Exalted is He). He has not divulged it to anyone, and it cannot be reached by any device. It cannot be impaired by any means. No deficiency can corrupt it, and nothing can disrupt it. It is the secret of Allāh (Exalted is He), kept in the presence of Allāh. No one is privy to it, and the universe cannot find access to it.

“Divine providence [*ināya*] is eternal, not temporal. Allāh (Exalted is He) qualifies whomever He wills among His creatures as worthy to receive it. The mark of one who is worthy of Divine providence is captivity, then imprisonment, then confinement in chains, then being deprived by Him of all connection with creatures.”

•Concerning the state of ecstasy [*wajd*].

When someone asked him about the state of ecstasy [*wajd*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is the state in which the spirit [*rūḥ*] is preoccupied with the

<sup>150</sup> In the work cited in note 3 on p. 28

above, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has treated the subject of contentment [*riḍā*] in depth, and at considerable length. (See Vol. 5, pp. 145–56, of the Al-Baz edition.)

sweetness of the remembrance [*dhikr*], and the lower self [*nafs*] is preoccupied with the pleasure of the entertainment [*taṭrīb*], while the innermost being [*sirr*] remains wholly devoted to the Beloved Friend [*Ḥabīb*], impervious to any outside influence, in its dedication to the Truth, in the presence of the Truth [*Ḥaqq*].

“The experience of ecstasy is a beverage which the Master [*Mawlā*] gives his saint [*walī*] to drink, on the pulpit of His Noble Grace [*Karāma*]. When he drinks, he becomes light-headed, and when he becomes light-headed, his heart flies on the wings of intimate friendship [*uns*] in the gardens of Holiness [*Quds*]. Then it falls into the ocean of awe, and is thrown into a trance, so the ecstatic [*wājid*] swoons into unconsciousness.”

•Concerning fear [*khawf*].

When someone asked the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) about fear [*khawf*], he said:

“There are several kinds of fear. There is the fear [*khawf*] that applies to those who are guilty of sin [*mudhnibīn*]. There is the anxiety [*rahba*] that applies to those who practice worshipful service [*‘ābidīn*]. There is the apprehension [*khashya*] that applies to the learned [*‘ālimīn*]. There is the timidity [*wajal*] that applies to the lovers [*muḥibbīn*]. There is also the awe [*haiba*] that applies to those who know by direct experience [*‘ārifīn*].

“The fear experienced by sinners is the fear of the punishments that lie in store for them. The fear experienced by worshippers is due to [their uncertainty about] the spiritual reward of their acts of worshipful service. The fear experienced by the learned is the fear of committing *shirk khafī* [hidden association of partners with Allāh] in their acts of worshipful obedience. The fear experienced by the lovers is the fear of missing the Meeting [with the Beloved]. The fear experienced by those who know by direct experience takes the form of awe and reverence [*ta‘ẓīm*], which is the most intense kind of fear, because it never fades away, whereas these other kinds do abate, when they are met with compassion and tender kindness.”

•Concerning hope [*rajā’*].

In response to a question about hope [*rajā’*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“As far as the saints [*awliyā'*] are concerned, hope means having a good opinion [*ḥusn az-ẓann*] of Allāh (Exalted is He). It has nothing to do with any desire for benefit, nor for the removal of harm, because those who are worthy of sainthood [*ahl al-wilāya*] know full well that He has taken care of all their needs. That knowledge makes them realize the value of personal extinction [*fanā'*]. To have a good opinion [of Allāh] is therefore more meritorious than hope.

“Hope cannot exist without fear, because, if someone hopes to achieve something, he is bound to fear that it may escape him. To have a good opinion of Allāh (Exalted is He) means recognizing Him in the beauty of His attributes [*ṣifāt*], then basing your expectation [*amal*] of Him on what is relevant to Him, not on what relates to His servant. That expectation must be based on the knowledge that His attributes include Beneficent [*Muḥsin*], Generous [*Karīm*], Compassionate [*Raḥīm*], Gracious [*Latīf*], and Kind [*Ra'ūf*].

“To have a good opinion of Allāh (Exalted is He) means attaching your aspirations to previous experience of Divine providence [*ināya*], and directing your heart toward the Lord, without arousing desire in the heart, and without exciting unduly optimistic feelings.

“The craving of the common folk has many valid causes, which entitle it to be dignified by the term ‘hope [*rajā'*],’ but when most of those causes cease to provide its motivation, the term ‘greed [*ṭama'*]’ is more appropriate to it than the term ‘hope [*rajā'*].’

“Hope without fear is a sense of security [*amn*], while fear without hope is despair [*qunūt*].

“As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) once said:

If the fear of the true believer could be weighed, and his hope, the two would not be equal in weight.”

•Concerning the sense of shame [*ḥayā'*].

When someone asked the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) about the sense of shame [*ḥayā'*], he said:

“It means that the servant [of the Lord] feels too ashamed to say “Allāh,” so long as he has not fulfilled his duty to Him. It means that he turns toward Allāh in unlawful situations, and that he does not appeal to Allāh for anything to which he is not entitled. It means that he abandons acts of sinful disobedience out of shame, not from fear.

It means that he duly performs all acts of worshipful obedience, aware that the Lord of Truth is watching over Him, so that he feels a sense of shame in His presence.

“The sense of shame [*ḥayāʾ*] is engendered by the removal of the veil between the heart and the experience of awe [*ḥaiba*].”

•Concerning direct witnessing [*mushāhada*].

In response to a question concerning direct witnessing [*mushāhada*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is the experience of becoming blind to the two realms of being [this world and the Hereafter] with the eye of the heart, and beholding the Lord of Truth with the eye of direct perception [*maʿrifā*]. It means that the hearts acquire insight, through the pure vision of certainty [*yaqīn*], into what He has told us about the invisible realms [*ghuyūb*].”

•Concerning nearness [*qurb*].

When someone asked the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) about nearness [*qurb*], he said:

“It is the rolling up of distances by the grace of proximity [*ṭayy al-masāfāt bi-luṭf al-mudānāt*].”

•Concerning spiritual inebriation [*sukr*].

When someone asked him about spiritual inebriation [*sukr*], the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained:

“It is the fermentation [*ghalayān*] of the hearts, brought about by the remembrance [*dhikr*] of the Beloved. Fear [*khawf*] is the disturbance of the hearts, induced by what they learn from the impact of the Beloved. Certainty [*yaqīn*] is the verification of the causes and the secrets, through mastery of the transcendental mysteries, contact with the Beloved, separation from everything apart from Him, the cultivation of intimate familiarity, estrangement from external influences, and total absorption in remembrance [*dhikr*].

“It means that you see yourself, in the state of remembrance, as completely absent from everything other than Him. It means that you abandon artificial respect in the state of direct witnessing, and pretended affection in the state of Meeting. Direct witnessing makes

ordinary comprehension impossible, and total absorption in love is inconceivable by any stretch of the imagination.

“When the wish gathers strength, and the remembrance becomes connected with it, and the dedication becomes intense, love [*maḥabba*] is engendered thereby. When the wish for Him envelops the heart, the whole of it becomes His possession. Then, when He has possessed it, the wish for anything other than Him falls from the heart, and the transfer of ownership becomes a reality. This is a pure state of being. When you remember Him, you are a lover [*muḥibb*], and when you hear His remembrance of you, you are a loved one [*maḥbūb*].

“Your fellow creatures are the veil that screens you from your own self [*nafs*], and your own self is the veil that screens you from your Lord [*Rabb*].

“Poverty [*faqr*] is a kind of death, yet people try to enjoy life in it.

“Talk [*qāl*] is what the common people are guided by, whereas the spiritual state [*ḥāl*] is the source of guidance for the special few.

“When He sets you at ease, a state of relaxation is experienced. Your dispensation [*rukḥṣa*] is converted into strict observance [*‘azīma*], then your strict observance is converted into playfulness [*dalāl*]. Dispensation is for those who are lacking in faith [*īmān*]. Strict observance is for those whose faith is perfect. Sovereignty [*mulk*] is for those who are personally extinct [*fānīn*].”

•Concerning the meaning of the term “[spiritual] pauper” [*faqīr*].

When someone asked the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) about the meaning of the term “[spiritual] pauper” [*faqīr*], he said: “[In the Arabic script, it is written with the letters]: *fā’-qāf-yāy-rā’*.” Then he explained the significance of each of these letters in poetic verse:

The initial *fā’* of the *faqīr* stands for his absorption [*fanā’*] in his essence,  
and his detachment [*farāgh*] from his description and his attributes.

*fā’u ’l-faqīri fanā’u-hu fī dhāti-hi—wa farāghu-hu min na’ti-hi wa ṣifāti-h.*

The *qāf* stands for the strength [*quwwa*] of his heart  
in [its dedication to] his Beloved,

and his commitment [*qiyām*] to Allāh for the sake of His good pleasure.

*wa ’l-qāfu quwwatu qalbi-hi bi-Ḥabībi-hi—wa qiyāmu-hu li’llāhi fī marḍāti-h.*

The yāy shows that he pins his hope [yarjū] on Him, and fears [yakhāfu] Him, and performs [yaqūmu] his duty as true devotion demands.

wa 'l-yāyu yarjū bi-hi wa yakhāfu-hu—wa yaqūmu bi't-taqwā bi-ḥaqqi tuqāti-h.

The rā' stands for the refinement [riqqa] of his heart and its purity, and its return [rujū'] to Allāh from its carnal desires.

wa 'r-rā' u riqqatu qalbi-hi wa-ṣafā' u-hu—wa rujū' u-hu li'llāhi 'an shahawāti-h.

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then went on to say:

“What is required of the spiritual pauper [faqīr] is that he should be flexible in thinking [fīkr] and centered in remembrance [dhikr], courteous in disagreement [munāza'a] and ready to assist in reconciliation [murāja'a]. He must seek nothing from the Lord of Truth but the Truth [Ḥaqq], and he must practice nothing but truthfulness [ṣidq]. He must be the most tolerant of people, and the most self-effacing. His laughter should be of the cheerful, smiling kind, and his curiosity should be used as an instrument of learning. He should be a reminder to the heedless, and a teacher to the ignorant. He must not hurt those who hurt him, and he must not meddle in things that do not concern him.

“He must give plenty in the way of favors, but little in the way of offense. He must be careful to abstain from things that are unlawful, and stand well clear of things that are of dubious legality [shubuhāt]. He must be a helper [ghawth] to the stranger, and a father to the orphan. His joy should be apparent in his face, while his sadness is stored in his heart. He should be engrossed in his contemplation [fīkr] and happy in his poverty [faqr]. He must not disclose a secret, nor rend a veil. He must be graceful in movement, bountiful in kindness, charming in outlook, generous in providing benefits, refined in taste, excellent in moral character, and very gentle.

“He should be a precious substance that melts and flows. He should be long on silence [ṣamt], agreeable in manner [na't], forbearing when he is treated foolishly, and very patient with anyone who treats him badly. There should be no freezing [jumūd] of the feelings in his presence, and no extinguishing [khumūd] of the fire of Truth. He must never be slanderous [nammūm], envious [ḥasūd], impetuous [ajūl], or malicious [ḥaqūd]. He must treat the elderly with deference, and the young with compassion.

“He must be worthy of trust [*amāna*] and far from betrayal [*khiyāna*]. His habit should be true devotion, and modesty should be his natural disposition. He should always be on the alert, and make vigilance his constant practice. He should take little for granted, and be very long-suffering. He should mean little to himself, but a great deal to his brothers. His behavior should be an example of good conduct [*adab*], and his speech should be a marvel [*‘ajab*]. He must never gloat over anyone’s misfortune, nor speak ill of anyone behind his back.

“He must be dignified and very patient, content and very thankful. He should spend little time in talking, and make a frequent practice of ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] and fasting. He must be truthful of tongue, and steadfast of heart. He should treat his guests with cordial hospitality, and supply everyone present with whatever food is available. When disasters befall him, his neighbors must not be adversely affected.

“He must not be a verbal abuser [*sabbāb*], a backbiter [*mughtāb*], a slanderer [*ghayyāb*], a calumniator [*nammām*], or a faultfinder [*dhammām*]. He must not be impetuous [*‘ajūl*], inattentive [*ghafūl*], envious [*hasūd*], irritable [*malūl*], malicious [*haqūd*], or ungrateful [*kanūd*].

“He must have a tongue that is stored away [*makhzūn*], a heart that is grief-stricken [*maḥzūn*], a way of speaking that is measured [*mawzūn*], and a way of thinking that travels far and wide, through what has been and what is yet to be [*mā yakūn*].”



## More reports concerning the charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.

**I**t was Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir al-Ḥusainī who said: “I once heard my father say: “At his regular public session [*majlis*], Our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir used to deliver lectures on all the religious sciences [*‘ulūm*], and he always spoke spontaneously. From the moment when the Shaikh stepped up to the lectern, until well into the middle of the session, the awe he inspired would keep the audience perfectly still and quiet. No one could be heard clearing his throat, blowing his nose, making the slightest cough, or saying a word, and no one would get up from his seat.

“Then the Shaikh would say: “Now the talking [*qāl*] is over, and we are ready to receive the spiritual state [*ḥāl*]!” The people present would immediately feel an intense vibration, and they would experience the spiritual state and the rapture of ecstasy [*wajd*].

“No account of his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] would be complete, if it failed to mention the fact that his voice was always perfectly audible, so that those at the very back of the audience could hear it as clearly as those sitting closest to him, despite the vast size of the gathering.

“He used to address the unspoken thoughts and feelings [*khawāṭir*] of the people attending his session, and confront them with open disclosure.

“As soon as the Shaikh stepped up to the lectern, all the people present would stand upright in his honor. Whenever he told them to be silent, they would become so quiet, out of profound respect for him, that nothing could be heard from them at all, apart from the breaths they were breathing.

“When people tried to lower their hands, in the course of his session, they sometimes found themselves touching men who were present in their midst, although they could not see them. While the Shaikh was speaking, they would sometimes hear a gasp or a cry, coming from a seemingly empty space. They might also hear the swish of a loose robe [*jubba*], as its invisible wearer fell from the air and landed on the floor of the meeting place. Those sounds were made by the men of the Unseen [*rijāl al-Ghaib*] and other mysterious visitors.”

It was Shaikh Abū Saʿīd (or maybe Abū Saʿd) al-Qailawī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said: “On more than one occasion, I saw Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and others from among the Prophets (may Allāh’s blessings be upon them all) in attendance at Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir’s public session [*majlis*], and I noticed that the Chieftain treated his servant with honor. I also witnessed the spirits of the Prophets (peace be upon them), as they moved about in the heavens and on the earth, with the movement of the winds on the horizons. I also noticed that the angels (peace be upon them) would arrive on the scene, troops of them after troops. I saw the men of the Unseen [*rijāl al-Ghaib*] racing one another to his session. I noticed that Abu ʿl-ʿAbbās al-Khiḍr<sup>151</sup> (peace be upon him) was frequently in attendance, so I asked him why he came, and he explained: ‘If anyone wishes for success [*ḥalāl*], he needs to attend this session on a regular basis!’” (Here ends this quotation.)

☞ At Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir’s command, conveyed by the servant of Shaikh ʿAlī ibn al-Hītī, the Sulṭān of the Persians withdraws his army from Baghdād.<sup>152</sup> ☞

The Sulṭān of the Persians [ʿAjam] once advanced upon Baghdād with a huge army [*jaish ʿaramram*]. The Caliph was incapable of mounting an effective resistance, so he came to Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir

<sup>151</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

<sup>152</sup> In the Table of Contents [*Fihrist*] to *Qalāʿid al-Jawāhir*, this section is mistakenly assigned to p. 68 of the Arabic text, whereas it is actually printed on p. 74 thereof.

and sought his help. The Shaikh responded by telling Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hītī: “Order these invaders to ride away from Baghdād!” “To hear is to obey,” said Shaikh ‘Alī, who promptly told his servant: “Go out to the army of the Persians, and make your way around to their rear. There you will find a cloth wrapper, hoisted on a staff to form a kind of tent. You will find three men underneath it, so you must say to them: ‘Alī ibn al-Hītī is telling you to ride away from Baghdād.’ If they say to you: ‘We only came here in obedience to a command,’ you must reply: ‘The same applies to me. I have only come to you in obedience to a command.’”

The servant set out at once. As soon as he reached the three men, he conveyed his message to them, and they stated their case to him. Then one of them stretched out his hand, took hold of that staff, and threw it aside. He rolled up the cloth wrapper, and they set off toward the Persians. Lo and behold, the army had already broken camp, and returned to the region from which it had come!

May Allāh be well pleased with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir and Shaikh ‘Alī!

☞ A green bird comes to hear Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s lecture. ☞

Shaikh Muḥammad ibn al-Harawī has told us: “One day, when I was present at the session [*majlīs*] held by our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), he kept speaking until he became completely immersed in his lecture. It was then that he said: ‘If Allāh (Exalted is He) wished to send a green bird<sup>153</sup> to hear my lecture, He would certainly do so.’ Before he had finished uttering this sentence, along came a beautiful green bird. It went up inside his sleeve, and did not come out again.”

☞ Shaikh Yūsuf al-Hamadānī urges Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir to become a public speaker. ☞

It was Shaikh al-Jubbā’ī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy

<sup>153</sup> Green birds are traditionally associated with the Gardens of Paradise, as Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has explained in the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. (Vol. 1, pp. 229–30, of the Al-Baz edition.)

upon him) who said: "Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said:

"At the time of his arrival in Baghdād, a man called Shaikh Yūsuf al-Hamadānī was also called the Cardinal Pole [*Qutb*]. He lodged in a certain guesthouse [*ribāṭ*], and as soon as I heard that he was there, I walked over to that guesthouse. I looked for him in vain, however, until someone told me: 'He is down in the basement,' so I went downstairs to find him. As soon as he caught sight of me, he stood up to greet me, took me by the hand, and sat me down beside him. He knew me through and through, intuitively, so he told me all about my spiritual states, and gave me a solution to everything that had been a problem for me. Then he said: 'O 'Abd al-Qādir, you must lecture to the people.'

"O my master,' I said to him, 'I am a Persian [*'Ajamī*], so how can I lecture to the classical Arabic-speakers of Baghdād?' He dismissed my objection by telling me: 'You have committed the whole of the Glorious Qur'ān to memory. You have mastered the study of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], not only in its basic principles, but also in the areas of scholarly disagreement. You have also made a thorough study of Arabic grammar and philology, as well as the exegesis [*tafsīr*] of the Glorious Qur'ān. How can you be less than fully qualified to lecture to the people? You must step up to the lectern and speak, for I see in you a root, and that root will surely grow into a date-palm!'

"May Allāh be well pleased with Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and Shaikh Yūsuf, and may He be well pleased with us on their account."

### ☞ Shaikh Abū Madyan asks al-Khiḍr about Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. ☞

Shaikh Abū Madyan ibn Shu'aib al-Maghribī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has told us: "I happened to meet al-Khiḍr<sup>154</sup> (peace be upon him), so I asked him about the Shaikhs of the East and the West at the present time. When I asked him about Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he told me: 'He is the leader of the champions of truth [*imām aṣ-ṣiddīqīn*], and the competent authority of those who know by direct experience [*hujjat*

<sup>154</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

*al-‘arīfīn*]. He is a breath of life in the sphere of direct knowledge [*rūḥ fi ‘l-ma‘rifa*], and his business is intimate converse between all the saints [*awliyā’*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them).”

☞ Two further accounts of the appearance of green birds. ☞

It was Shaikh Muḥammad ibn al-Harawī who said: “One day, while the Shaikh was speaking at his regular public session [*majlis*], some of the people in the audience became listless and lethargic, so he said: ‘If Allāh (Glory be to Him) wished to send green birds to hear my lecture, He would surely do so.’ Before he had finished uttering this sentence, the meeting place was teeming with green birds, and everyone present could see them.”

Shaikh Muḥammad ibn al-Harawī also said: “One day, while the Shaikh was speaking about the Omnipotence [*Qudra*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), the people present were immersed in awe and submissive humility. Then a bird, of a very unusual species, came flying by the session. Some of the people focused their attention on it, instead of listening to the Shaikh’s lecture, so he said: ‘By the Might and Glory of the Lord, if I wished to say to this bird: “Drop dead, as dead as a doornail,” it would indeed drop dead, as dead as a doornail.’ Before he had finished speaking, the bird dropped down on the floor of the meeting place, as dead as a doornail.”

☞ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is seen to grow smaller and smaller, then larger and larger. ☞

It was Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū an-Nahr-Malikī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: “On one occasion, while I was present at the session held by our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was speaking from the first stair of the lectern. He suddenly interrupted his speech, became absent-minded for a moment, and stepped down to the floor. Then he mounted the lectern, and sat on the second stair. I noticed that the first stair had widened, till it stretched as far as the eye could see. It was carpeted with green silk brocade, and seated upon it were Allāh’s

Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī (may Allāh's good pleasure be upon them all).

"The Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him) manifested Himself upon the heart of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, so he leaned over, till he was on the verge of falling down. Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) held him steady, to keep him from falling. Then the Shaikh grew smaller and smaller, till he became just like a sparrow. Then he grew larger and larger, till he assumed a gigantic form. Then he vanished from my sight."

When Shaikh Baqā was later questioned about his vision of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and his Companions (may Allāh be well pleased with them all), he said: "Their spirits [*arwāḥ*] took on physical shape, and Allāh (Exalted is He) reinforced them with an energy that made them visible. They could therefore be seen by anyone whom Allāh (Exalted is He) empowered to behold them, in the form of physical bodies, and with the attributes of substantial entities. Evidence of this can be found in the traditional account [*ḥadīth*] of the Heavenly Ascension [*Mi'rāj*] [of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace)]."

When someone asked him to explain why Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) grew smaller and smaller, and then larger and larger, Shaikh Baqā said: "The impact of the first Divine manifestation [*tajallī*] was too stunning for a human being to absorb, without Prophetic support [*ta'yīd Nabawī*]. That is why the Shaikh almost collapsed, and would have done so, if Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) had not caught him in time. The quality of the second manifestation was that of Divine Majesty [*Jalāl*], which explains why the Shaikh grew smaller and smaller. As for the third manifestation, he witnessed it as a display of Divine Beauty [*Jamāl*], which accounts for his reinvigoration, and explains why he grew larger and larger.

Such is the bounty of Allāh,  
*dhālika faḍlu 'llāhi*

which He bestows on whom He will.  
*yu'tī-hi man yashā':*

Allāh is the Owner of infinite bounty.  
*wa 'llāhu Dhu 'l-faḍli 'l-ʿaẓīm. (57:21)"*

☞ Shaikh Jāgīr and Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs discuss  
the special merits of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

The wise Shaikh Mas‘ūd al-Ḥāthī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has informed us: “I once entered the presence of Shaikh Jāgīr and Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), while the two of them were engaged in conversation. They embarked on a discussion of the Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them), and what they had previously experienced in their fellowship.

“It was Shaikh Jāgīr (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: ‘Of all the Shaikhs who have appeared on the scene, after my master Tāj al-‘Ārifin Abu ‘l-Wafā’ (may Allāh be well pleased with him), there has been none more complete in spiritual state, none more effective in management, none stronger in capability, none more perfect in character, and none higher in spiritual station, than my master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). It was from him that the Cardinal Poleship [*Quṭbiyya*] was transmitted to my master ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥitī (may Allāh be well pleased with him).’

“Shaikh Jāgīr then went on to say: ‘Because my master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was so firmly established in the spiritual states and stations of Cardinal Poleship [*Quṭbiyya*], so completely immersed in its procedures, so fully in control of all its aspects, and so capable of combining all its elements, he accomplished more than anyone else, among all the Shaikhs, to the best of our knowledge.’”

Shaikh Mas‘ūd continued: “As soon as we were alone with Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs, we asked him about what we had just heard from Shaikh Jāgīr (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He said: ‘He reported what he has witnessed with his own eyes, and stated what he has learned from all that Allāh (Exalted is He) has taught him. He is a reliable witness, worthy of approval in all his words and deeds.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

☞ Reports concerning Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s  
lamentations. ☞

We owe this next report to the two Shaikhs, Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān aṣ-Ṣirāfinī and ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Ḥuraimī, who said:

“Our Shaikh, Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), used to weep while saying: ‘O my Lord, how can I guide the spirit [*rūḥ*] to You, when it is a proven fact that everything belongs to You?’

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would sometimes recite this verse of poetry:

What is the use of classical Arabic grammar, if true devotion is lacking?  
What harm can come to the truly devout, from using a foreign tongue?”

According to another report, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was speaking one day, when the people in his audience became lethargic and apathetic, so he uttered these poetic verses:

Do not give that drink to me alone, for You have not accustomed me  
to being stingy with it to the people sitting in my company.

You are the Generous One, so does it fit with generosity  
that boon companions should leave without [drinking from] the cup?

The people were profoundly shaken by this, and one or two of them died in the course of the session.

May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!

### ☞ Eulogies of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

It was Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āshūr as-Sinjārī who said: “On more than one occasion, I heard Shaikh Suwaid as-Sinjārī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say:

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is our leader [*imām*] and our exemplary guide [*qudwa*] to Allāh (Exalted is He) and to His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). He is the foremost authority of all the people of his generation, in knowledge of the spiritual state [*‘ilm al-ḥāl*], putting words into practice [*fi’l al-qāl*], and the stations of steadfastness in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

It was Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdu’llāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ismā‘īl, the son of that exemplary guide, Shaikh Suwaid as-Sinjārī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who said: “I heard my father say:

“My own father (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) would often express his great admiration for Shaikh

Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He mentioned him so frequently, in most of his public sessions [*majālis*], that people longed to see him. On one occasion, he said: “Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) is one of the chief ministers of the Presence of Holiness [*ṣudūr Ḥaḍrat al-Quds*].

““May Allāh be well pleased with them all!””

☞ Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir preserves his state of ritual purity between the prayers of late evening [*'ishā'*] and daybreak [*ṣubḥ*]. ☞

Abu 'l-Faṭḥ al-Harawī has told us: “I worked in the service of my master, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), for forty years. Throughout that entire period, he used to perform the ritual prayer of daybreak [*ṣalāt aṣ-ṣubḥ*] with the ablution of the previous late evening [*wuḍū' al-'ishā'*].<sup>155</sup> Whenever he used the toilet [in the course of the day], he would renew his ablution [*wuḍū'*] immediately, then perform two cycles of prayer [*rak'atāin*]. When he performed the late-evening prayer [*ṣalāt al-'ishā'*], he would enter his private chamber [*khalwa*], and no one would enter it with him. He would not come out of it again, until the rising of the dawn [*fajr*]. On several occasions, the Caliph [*Khalīfa*] came to him at night, for the purpose of meeting with him, but he was never able to do that until the dawn arrived.

“One day, someone said in his presence: ‘How excellent are the bewildered [*mūlahīn*]!’ The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) responded to this by saying: ‘More excellent are the sane ones [*'uqalā'*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), because the bewildered [*mūlah*] is deprived of his faculty of reason by a single look or glance. As for the sane [*'āqil*], the sweet breezes of Allāh (Exalted is He) blow upon him, yet not a wisp of the hair of his beard makes the slightest movement, as he is transported by them on the camel-litters of Prophethood [*maḥāmīl an-Nubuwwa*].”

<sup>155</sup> That is to say, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) preserved his state of ritual purity throughout the night.

☞ For the very first time, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is referred to as “The Gray Falcon [*al-Bāz al-Ashhab*].” ☞

It was Shaikh Abū Sulaimān Dāwūd al-Manbijī who said: “One day, when I was in the presence of Shaikh ‘Uqail, someone said to him: ‘A noble young Persian man has acquired fame in Baghdād. His name is ‘Abd al-Qādir.’ Shaikh ‘Uqail responded by saying: ‘His fame in heaven is even greater than his fame on earth. That is the exalted hero who, in the Realm of Sovereignty [*Malakūt*], is called the Gray Falcon [*al-Bāz al-Ashhab*]. He will achieve unique distinction in his own time. The power of command will be conferred upon him, and it will issue from him.’

“Shaikh ‘Uqail (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was the first to refer to our Shaikh and our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), by the honorific surname ‘The Gray Falcon [*al-Bāz al-Ashhab*].’

“May Allāh be well pleased with them both!”

☞ Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn tells two instructive tales about Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

This next report comes from Abu ‘l-Muẓaffar Shams ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Qaza‘li ibn ‘Abdī’llāh at-Turkī al-‘Awfi al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanafī, the grandson of Ibn al-Jawzī (may Allāh be well pleased with them both). He said:

“I knew that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir used to hold his public session [*majlis*] every Sunday morning, so I was looking forward to attending it, when I went to bed the night before. In my sleep, I happened to experience an emission of seminal fluid, [which meant that I needed to perform a major ritual ablution]. It was a very cold night, however, so I said to myself: ‘I’m not going to miss the Shaikh’s session!’

“[I attended the session] and, as soon as it was over, I took a bath. Then I went to the schoolhouse, where the Shaikh was in the pulpit. The moment his eye fell upon me, he exclaimed: ‘O twister [*yā dabīr*]! You attend our session while you are in a state of ritual impurity [*junub*], and you plead the cold as your excuse!’ May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

The aforementioned Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn also said: “I heard the following story from a righteous man, a fruit collector called Muẓaffar, who told me: ‘Since I knew that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir held his public session every Sunday morning, I used to sleep overnight at the schoolhouse. One night, when the weather was extremely hot, I climbed up onto the schoolhouse roof, hoping to satisfy my appetite for ripe dates. ‘O my God [*yā Ilāhī*],’ said I, ‘if only there are five ripe dates up here!’

“The Shaikh had a small door leading onto the roof. That door swung open, and out stepped the Shaikh, holding five ripe dates in his hand. ‘O Muẓaffar,’ he cried, though he did not know me personally before then, ‘take what you are looking for!’”

It was Abu ‘l-Muẓaffar Shams ad-Dīn, the reporter [not Muẓaffar the fruit collector], who said: “There is much to be learned from this,” meaning, “from these two stories.”

May Allāh be well pleased with him!

☞ According to Shaikh Abu ‘n-Naṣīr, the East is superior to the West because of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. ☞

Shaikh ‘Umar aṣ-Ṣanhājī has told us: “One of our companions once came to Shaikh Abu ‘n-Naṣīr, seeking his permission to travel to Baghdād. The Shaikh said to him: ‘When you get to Baghdād, there is a man in that city whom you must not fail to see. He is a noble Persian, and his name is ‘Abd al-Qādir. If you do see him, you must give him the greeting of peace on my behalf, and ask him to offer a prayer of supplication [*du‘ā*’]. You must also say to him: “Do not let the memory of Abu ‘n-Naṣīr slip from your heart.” I am telling you this because, by Allāh, no one has been created like him, among the Persians in their entirety. You will never see the like of him in the whole of ‘Irāq. The East is superior to the West because of him. His knowledge and his pedigree have distinguished him very clearly over all the saints [*awliyā*’].”



☞ The Caliph provides special entertainment for Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir, Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā'ī and Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī. ☞

It was Shaikh Shāwir as-Sabtī al-Maḥallī who said: "The Caliph [Khalīfa] once held a wedding banquet [*walīma*]<sup>156</sup> in Baghdād, to which he invited all the Shaikhs and scholars of 'Irāq. All of them attended, except our master Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir, Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir, and Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā'ī (may Allāh be well pleased with them). When the guests had taken their leave, the Grand Vizier turned to the Caliph and said: 'Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, Shaikh 'Adī, and Shaikh Aḥmad were conspicuous by their absence.' 'Indeed,' said the Caliph, 'it seemed as if no one was present!' He then ordered his chamberlain [*ḥājib*] to go and summon Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. He also instructed him to travel to Mount al-Hakkār and to Umm 'Ubaida, in order to bring Shaikh 'Adī and Shaikh Aḥmad into his presence."

Shaikh Shāwir went on to say: "Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir said to me: 'Before the chamberlain sets out from the Caliph's court, and before the two scrolls are inscribed,<sup>157</sup> O Shāwir, you must go to the mosque outside the Racetrack Gate [*Bāb al-Ḥalba*]. In it you will find Shaikh 'Adī ibn al-Musāfir, together with two companions, so tell them to come here to me. Then go to the graveyard of ash-Shawnizī, where you will find Shaikh ar-Rifā'ī, also together with two companions, so tell them to come here to me.'

"I went at once to the mosque [*masjid*], where I found Shaikh 'Adī together with two companions, so I said to him: 'O my master, respond to the call of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir!' He said: 'To hear is to obey!' They all got up to go, and I went along with them.

"O Shāwir,' Shaikh 'Adī said to me, 'are you not going to Shaikh Aḥmad, as the Shaikh instructed you?' 'Yes, of course!' I replied, and off I went to the graveyard of ash-Shawnizī, where I found Shaikh Aḥmad together with two companions. 'O my master,' I said to him, 'respond to the call of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir!' He said: 'To hear is to obey!' and they all got up to go.

<sup>156</sup> In the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has described the customary observance of an Islāmic wedding feast [*walīma*]. (See Vol. 1, pp. 132-3, of the Al-Baz edition.)

<sup>157</sup> This presumably refers to the letters of invitation to be delivered to Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir and Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā'ī (may Allāh be well pleased with them).

“The two Shaikhs met at the door of the guesthouse of our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, at the time of the sunset prayer [*maghrib*], so he came out and welcomed them. They had only been there for a very short time, when the chamberlain arrived, expecting to find the Shaikh alone. He was surprised to see the other two with him, so he hurried back to the Caliph and informed him of the situation. The Caliph thereupon inscribed a letter to them, in his own handwriting, asking them to present themselves at his court. He sent his son to them, as well as the chamberlain, so they gave him a positive response.

“My master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir instructed me to go along with him. When we reached the bank [of the river Tigris], lo and behold, there was Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī! The other Shaikhs greeted him warmly, and he joined them in their journey. He came with us to a beautiful palace, and there inside it was the Caliph, standing with a girdle around his waist. He had two servants with him, but there was no one else in the palace. “The Caliph greeted his visitors, and he said to them: ‘O chieftains, when kings enter the presence of their subjects, they spread out silk for them to set their feet upon.’ He then laid down the hem of his robe, and asked them to walk on it, so they did as he asked. Then he led us to a well-stocked table mat, so the Shaikhs sat down and ate, and we ate with them.

“After the meal, the Shaikhs left the palace, and went to pay a visit to the tomb of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him). It was a pitch-dark night, so whenever Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir came upon a rock, or a log of wood, or a wall, or a grave, he would point his hand toward it, and it would shine with a light like the light of the moon. They would all walk on in that light, until it ceased to shine. Then the Shaikh would point at another obstacle, and it would shine in its turn.

“They kept moving along in that fashion, walking in the light provided. None of them went ahead of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, who was therefore the first to arrive at the tomb of Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him). The four Shaikhs went inside to pay their visit, while the rest of us stood at the entrance to the mausoleum, and waited until they came out.

“When the Shaikhs were ready to go their separate ways, Shaikh ‘Adī said to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir: ‘Give me a piece of good advice!’ To this he replied: ‘I advise you to follow the Book and the Sunna!’”



## Further examples of tremendous respect for Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, as demonstrated by his contemporary Shaikhs.

Shaikh ‘Umar al-Bazzāz has told us: “I was eager to see Shaikh ‘Adī ibn al-Musāfir, so I asked Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir for permission to pay him a visit. He gave me his permission, so I traveled until I came to Mount al-Hakkār. There I found Shaikh ‘Adī, standing at the door of his convent [*zāwiya*] in Lālish. ‘Welcome, O ‘Umar!’ he said to me: ‘You have left the ocean, and you have come to the rivulet. O ‘Umar, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is the holder of the reins of all the saints [*awliyā*’]. He is the leader and guide of the caravans of the lovers [*muḥibbīn*] in their entirety, in this day and age. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!’”

It was that wise Shaikh and exemplary guide, Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Wahb ash-Shaibānī ar-Rabī‘ī al-Mūsawī ash-Shinjārī, who said: “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is one of the outstanding figures of this world. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is one of the incomparable saints [*awliyā*’]. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is one of the priceless treasures of the universe. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is one of gifts of Allāh (Exalted is He) to the realm of being. Congratulations to those who sit in his company! Congratulations to those whose thoughts and feelings are influenced by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir! May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

Shaikh Yaḥyā at-Takrītī has told us: “When Shaikh Mūsā ibn Hāmān (or maybe ibn Hāmīn) az-Zuwalī arrived in Baghdād, he was traveling as a Pilgrim [*Ḥājj*], and my father and I were traveling with him. When he met with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, we noticed how very respectfully Shaikh Mūsā treated him, and how very politely he

conducted himself in his company. We had never seen him accord such deference to anyone else. As soon as we were alone with him, my father said to him: 'I have never seen you treat anyone with anything like the profound respect you paid to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir.' To this he replied: 'Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir is the best of all the people in this time of ours. He is the Sultān of the saints [*awliyā*'], and the chieftain of those who know by direct experience [*'arīfīn*] in our own day and age. How could I not be on my best behavior, with someone in whose presence the angels of heaven are always on their best behavior?' May Allāh be well pleased with Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and Shaikh Mūsā!"

We owe this next report to the Shaikh of Shaikhs, Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Shaikh ash-Shuyūkh Abu 'l-Barakāt Ismā'il ibn Aḥmad an-Nīsābūrī, who said: "It was in Damascus, in the year [A.H.] 596, that I heard Shaikh Arslān<sup>158</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say, when the name of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had been mentioned:

"Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) is one of the chief ministers of the Divine Presence [*Ḥaḍra*], and one of the unique individuals of the universe. He has been empowered to utter words of wisdom. He has been entrusted with the decisions of effective management [*taṣrīf*], applicable to every single one of his contemporaries, both near and far, in connection with giving and receiving, acceptance and rejection. He is the deputy [*nā'ib*] of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

It was the Shaikh of the Ṣūfīs, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Umar as-Suhrawardī, who said: "In the year [A.H.] 506, together with my paternal uncle, Shaikh Abu 'n-Najīb 'Abd al-Qāhir as-Suhrawardī, I entered the presence of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir. My uncle treated him with enormously deferential respect, and sat in front of him as an ear without a tongue. As soon as we had returned to the Nizāmiyya University, I asked my uncle for an explanation, and he said:

<sup>158</sup> Shaikh Arslān is also known as Shaikh Raslān ad-Dimashqī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who is discussed at some length on pp. 411–15 below. (See also p. 107 above.) The name Raslān is probably an arabicized form of Arslān, which is the Turkish word for "lion," also used metaphorically in the sense of "brave man."

“How could I not be on my best behavior in his company, when the entire universe is at his disposal? He has been empowered to manage the Realm of [Worldly] Dominion [*Mulk*], and he is glorified in the Realm of [Spiritual] Sovereignty [*Malakūt*]. He is unique in the whole world of existence at this time. How could I not be on my best behavior, with someone to whom my Owner [*Mālikī*] has entrusted the management of my heart and my spiritual state, and of the hearts and spiritual states of the saints [*awliyāʾ*], so that he can seize them, if he wishes, and release them, if he wishes? May Allāh be well pleased with them!”


☞ Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā predicts the advent of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, long before his birth. ☞

It was Shaikh Abū Muḥammad (or, as some call him, Shaikh Muḥammad) ash-Shunbukī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said:

“Our own Shaikh, Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā, would often mention Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. He used to refer to him as ‘the one who will appear in ‘Irāq in the middle of the fifth [Islāmic] century.’ He would give a detailed account of his excellent merit, but my understanding did not go beyond my hearing. Then I gained insight into the stations of the saints [*awliyāʾ*], and there he was, among the most prominent of them all! I gained insight into the stations of those drawn near [to the Lord], and there he was, among the most exalted of them all! I gained insight into the degrees of the enlightened [*mukāshafīn*], and there he was, among the most splendid of them all!

“Allāh will cause him to appear on the scene, in a manner in which none appear but the champions of the Truth [*ṣiddīqūn*], and those who derive their strength from the knowledge of Allāh (Exalted is He). He is one of those whose deeds and words provide guidance. Through his blessed grace, Allāh will raise some of His servants to the highest degrees. He is one of those whom Allāh will hail as shining examples to all the communities [*umam*], on the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*].

“May Allāh be well pleased with him! May He be well pleased with us, on his account, and may He enable us to derive benefit from his blessed gifts of grace, in this world and the Hereafter!”

Concerning the charismatic talents  
and exploits [*manāqib*] of  
the Shaikhs who extolled the merits  
of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir  
(may Allāh be well pleased with  
them all). 



## 1. Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā al-Baṭā'ihī

As for our master, the unique and universal Cardinal Pole [Qutb], Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā<sup>159</sup> al-Baṭā'ihī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was a man of tremendous worth and great importance. The most prominent Shaikhs of 'Irāq are all affiliated to him, for he was the first to establish the office of Shaikhdom [*mashyakha*] in 'Irāq, after the Shaikhs of the missionary period [*mashāyikh ar-risāla*] had gradually died out.

It was he who said: "If someone visits my tomb on forty Wednesdays [*arba'īna arba'ā*'], he will be granted, on the last of them, immunity from the Fire of Hell."

He also said: "I have received a solemn promise from my Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), to the effect that fire will never scorch a physical body, once it has entered this sanctuary of mine." It is said to be a fact, that no fish and no meat, once it has been inside his sanctuary (meaning his tomb), has ever been cooked by the use of fire, neither by any of the methods called *ṭabkh*, nor by any of the methods called *shayy*.<sup>160</sup>

More than a few senior-ranking Shaikhs received their training in his fellowship, including Shaikh Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī, to name one notable example. Most of the prominent Shaikhs of 'Irāq became affiliated to him. His teaching was propagated by a considerable

<sup>159</sup> At this point in the Arabic text, in which the short vowels are unmarked, the author specifically states that the initial consonant—<H-> in transliteration—is followed by the short vowel <-u-> [*bi-ḍamm al-hā*']. Since the name is uncommon, and the Arabic reader might therefore suspect a misspelling, he also emphasizes the correctness of the final <-ārā> [*rā' bain al-alifain*].

<sup>160</sup> According to the classical Arabic lexicographers, the term *ṭabkh* may be applied to almost any method of cooking: to boiling or stewing and the like, to roasting or broiling or frying, and also to baking. As for the term *shayy* (not to be confused with *shāy*, meaning tea), it applies to roasting, broiling, grilling, or frying. (See E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, art. Ṭ-B-KH and art. SH-W-Y.)

number of those endowed with splendid spiritual states. Countless masters of lofty spiritual stations began their careers as his apprentices. The Shaikhs and scholars were unanimous in according him the greatest honor and respect, in referring to his advice, and in having recourse to his judgment. They set out to visit him from every country and region, bringing votive offerings with them, and written reports were transmitted to him from every quarter. Followers of the spiritual path [*ahl as-sulūk*] hastened to him from every deep ravine.<sup>161</sup>

Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā was handsome in his attributes, noble in his traits of character, perfect in his courteous behavior, remarkable for his modest humility, intensely committed to following the rules of the Sacred Law [*Sharʿ*], and graciously disposed toward those devoted to the Sunna and the religion [*dīn*].

☞ Some of his wise sayings. ☞

He had a sublime way of speaking about the sciences concerned with intimate knowledge [*ʿulūm al-maʿārif*], as the following sayings will serve to illustrate:

• In the hearts of those who learn by direct experience [*ʿārifīn*], wisdom [*ḥikma*] speaks with the tongue of verification [*taṣdīq*]. In the hearts of the pious ascetics [*zāhidīn*], it speaks with the tongue of preferment [*tafḍīl*]. In the hearts of the worshipful servants [*ʿibād*], it speaks with the tongue of enabling grace [*tawfīq*]. In the hearts of the seekers [*murīdīn*], it speaks with the tongue of remembrance [*dhikr*]. In the hearts of the lovers [*muḥibbīn*], it speaks with the tongue of ardent yearning [*shawq*].

• Fellowship with Allāh (Exalted is He) is maintained through good conduct, constant respect, and persistent obedience. Fellowship with Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is maintained by following his Sunna and embracing religious knowledge [*ʿilm*]. Fellowship with ordinary people is maintained through goodness of moral character [*ḥusn al-khulq*].<sup>162</sup> Fellowship with the

<sup>161</sup> An allusion to the verse [*āya*] of the Qurʾān:

They will come to you on foot  
and on every lean camel,  
coming from every deep ravine. (22:27)

yaʿtū-ka rijālan  
wa ʿalā kulli dāmīrin  
yaʿtīna min kulli fajjīn ʿamīq.

<sup>162</sup> See note 4 on p. 30 above.

spiritual brethren [*ikhwān*] is maintained through constant cheerfulness [*bishr*], so long as no sin is involved. Fellowship with the ignorant is maintained through the constant practice of supplication [*du'ā'*] on their behalf, and by treating them with compassion.

- Togetherness with the Lord of Truth is synonymous with separation from everything other than Him, and separation from everything other than Him is synonymous with togetherness with Him.

- If someone comes in close contact [with the Lord] through loving friendship [*widād*], it means that he has been specially favored among His servants [*'ibād*].

- Since the Lord of Truth is Singular [*Wāhid*], it is necessary for His seeker to be singular in his essence [*dhāt*].

- The ardently yearning lover is obliged to give absolute preference to his Beloved, even if the contemplation of Him causes his personal extinction. He must therefore recognize meaningful indications, of a kind too subtle for others to notice.

- Eternity-without-beginning [*azal*] directs the lovers to the Beloved, with the tongue of loving friendship [*widād*]. This makes them blissfully happy for a while, but then the veil descends, and that happiness reverts to weeping.

- Fear [*khawf*] will connect you to Allāh (Exalted is He), whereas vain conceit [*'ujb*] will cut you off from Him.

- Your contempt for your fellow human beings is a terrible sickness, for which there is no cure.

### ☞ His early career as a highway robber. ☞

In the first stage of his adult life, Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to engage in highway robbery in [the region of 'Irāq known as] al-Baṭā'ih.<sup>163</sup> He operated with a band of comrades, and he was their commander.

<sup>163</sup> The Arabic term *baṭīḥa* (of which *baṭā'ih* is the plural form) is applied to a wide, pebbly, torrent-channel.

One night, he overheard a woman saying to her husband: “Make camp here, so that Ibn Huwārā and his companions will not capture us!” He took this to heart, and began to weep. “People are afraid of me,” he said, “but I am not afraid of Allāh (Exalted is He).” He repented there and then, and his companions all repented with him. He promptly changed his ways, turning in the direction of Allāh (Exalted is He), and treading on the foot of truthfulness [*ṣidq*] and sincere devotion [*ikhhlāṣ*] in his spiritual quest.

☞ His dream-conversation with the Prophet  
(Allāh bless him and give him peace). ☞

In those days, there was no well-known Shaikh in ‘Irāq, but he had a dream, in which he saw Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and Abū Bakr, the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*] (may Allāh’s good pleasure be upon him). “O Messenger,” he said, “invest me with a tattered cloak [*khirqā*]!” “O Ibn Huwārā,” the Messenger replied, “I am your Prophet, and this is your Shaikh.” He pointed to the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him), to whom he then said: “Invest Ibn Huwārā with your two emblems!” The Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him) responded by investing him with a gown and a cotton skullcap [*ṭāqīyya*], then he passed his hand over his head, stroked his forelock, and said: “May Allāh bless you!”

“O Abū Bakr [ibn Huwārā],” said Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), “you will revive the customary practices [*ṣunan*] of those members of my Community [*Umma*] who follow the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīq*] in ‘Irāq, after those practices have died out. From this point on, the masters of the Realities [*arbāb al-Ḥaqā’iq*], those beloved friends of Allāh, will appear anew, after their obliteration. The office of Shaikhdom [*mashyakha*] in ‘Irāq will henceforth reside in you, until the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*]. The sweet breezes of Allāh (Exalted is He) will blow, to celebrate your appearance on the scene.”

He woke up at that very moment, and discovered that he was wearing the gown and the skullcap. Meanwhile, the angelic proclamation could be heard throughout ‘Irāq: “Ibn Huwārā has attained to Allāh (Exalted is He, and Almighty and Glorious is He)!”

Accounts of his charismatic exploits.

It was the aforementioned Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said:

“I once came upon him in the canyon [*baṭīḥa*],<sup>164</sup> where he was all alone, except that the lions were crouched around him, and some of them were snuggling against his feet!”

In the words of Shaikh ‘Azzāz ibn Mustawda‘ al-Baṭā'ihī: “Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā was the first of the Shaikhs in ‘Irāq, after the passing of the righteous predecessors [*salaf*]. The lights were often ablaze in al-Baṭā'ih, due to the frequent presence of the men of the Unseen [*rijāl al-Ḡhaib*], who came there to visit him at night. He was someone whose prayer of supplication was sure to be answered [*mujāb ad-da‘wa*], and he was obviously empowered with effective disposition [*taṣrīf*].”

Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Abi ‘l-Ḥusain ‘Alī ar-Rāfi‘ī has told us: “A woman once came to Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā and said to him: ‘My son has been drowned in the river, and I had no one apart from him. By Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), I solemnly swear that Allāh has granted you the power to restore him to me. So, if you do not act accordingly, I shall complain about you to Allāh, and to His Messenger. ‘O my Lord,’ I shall say, ‘I came to him in my grief, and he was capable of removing my grief, but he would not do so.’

“The Shaikh bowed his head in silence for a moment, then he said: ‘Show me where your son was drowned.’ She took him to the bank of the river, and there was her son’s corpse, floating on the surface of the water. The Shaikh swam out through the water, until he reached the body. He slung it over his shoulder, brought it to the shore, and gave it to the bereaved mother. ‘Take him,’ he told her, and she discovered that he was alive. She walked away, and he walked along beside her, with his hand held in hers, just as if nothing at all had happened to him.”

Shaikh Aḥmad also said: “The town of Wāsiṭ was once shaken by an earthquake, so badly that it threatened to fall into the jaws of Behemoth [*Bahamūt*], after that Great Beast had split the seven strata of the earth asunder. When the Shaikh said to it: ‘Be still, O servant of Allāh!’ it replied: ‘I have been commanded to obey you, and you alone.’ It then became completely still.”

<sup>164</sup> See note 163 on p. 343 above.

It was Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī who said: “I used to visit the Shaikh in the canyon [*baṭīḥa*], where I would find him sitting in the water between the trees, all alone, except for the lions crouched around him. When he came out of the water, some of the lions would snuggle against his feet. One day, I saw a huge lion in front of him. It was rolling its cheek in the dust, apparently trying to tell him something, and the Shaikh seemed to be answering the beast. Then the lion went away, and I said to him: ‘By the One who has bestowed His grace upon you, what did that lion say to you, and what did you say to it?’

“‘O Shunbukī,’ the Shaikh replied, ‘it said to me: “For three whole days I had not tasted any food, and hunger was causing me pain, so, in the time before dawn, I appealed to Allāh (Exalted is He) for help. I was told: ‘Your sustenance is a cow [*baqara*] in the village of al-Humāmiyya. You must seize it as your prey, in spite of the injury that will befall you in the process.’ I am really afraid of that injury!” I told the lion: “A wound will be inflicted on your right side. You will suffer from it for a week, but then the pain will fade away.”

“‘I have seen on the Well-Kept Tablet [*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*] that the cow is indeed recorded as its sustenance. When it pounces on its prey, eleven men will come out from al-Humāmiyya. They will try to kill the lion, and three of those men will be eliminated. The first will die one hour before the second, and the third will die seven hours after the second. One of them will inflict a wound on the lion’s right side, but it will heal after a week.”

“On hearing this,” ash-Shunbukī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) went on to say, “I rushed off to al-Humāmiyya, where I found that the lion had arrived ahead of me. The whole scenario was enacted, just as the Shaikh had described it. Then, when I came to visit him a week later, I saw that very same lion in front of him, and I noticed that its wound was completely healed.” May Allāh be well pleased with those two Shaikhs!

According to another report, when Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā (may Allāh be well pleased with him) performed his ritual ablution [*wuḍū’*] at a disused well in al-Baṭā’ih, its water became copious and fresh.

He came from a Kurdish ethnic group, called the Huwāriyyūn. He settled in al-Baṭā'ih, and it was there that he died. He was buried in the area of the salt marsh [*malḥā'*], and the jinn mourned his passing with loud lamentation. May Allāh be well pleased with him!



## 2. Shaikh Muḥammad Ṭalḥa ash-Shunbukī

As for Shaikh Muḥammad (or, as some say, Abū Muḥammad) Ṭalḥa ash-Shunbukī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), he was a man of splendid worth and tremendous importance. Leadership in this [spiritual] business devolved upon him, in his day and age. In the training of the righteous seekers [*sālīkīn*] in ‘Irāq, and the resolution of their problems, he drew upon his personal experience of repentance.

More than a few distinguished scholars [*‘ulamā’*] received their education in his fellowship, including Shaikh Abu ‘l-Wafā’, Shaikh Maṣṣūr and Shaikh ‘Azzāz, to name only three of them. His teaching was propagated by whole communities of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, and he attracted students in vast numbers. He rose to prominence after his own Shaikh, Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

He was graceful in his attributes, highly intelligent, readily accessible, extremely modest, and dedicated to following the Sacred Law [*Shar‘*] and the customary practices of the Sunna.

Before he embarked on his spiritual career, he used to engage in highway robbery. One night, he and his comrades seized a caravan in the vicinity of Shaikh Ibn Huwārā’s village, and divided the spoils amongst themselves. Then, shortly before daybreak, they came to the Shaikh’s convent [*ẓāwīya*]. “Go about your business,” ash-Shunbukī told his fellow highwaymen, “for the Shaikh has seized the contents of my heart!” “We are with you!” his comrades replied, and they threw away all their captured goods.

As for Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā, he said to his own companions: “Come, let us step out to welcome our guests!” He went out to meet them, and, as soon as they saw him, they exclaimed: “O our

master, we have forbidden food in our bellies, and blood on our swords!" He responded by saying: "You must leave all that behind you, for Allāh (Exalted is He) has accepted you, on account of your inner potential." They repented at his hand, and Shaikh Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī stayed with him for three days, in order to obtain the benefits of his training. Then, on the fourth day, his host said to him: "You have now become a fully qualified Shaikh!" Turning to his own companions, Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā said: "Muḥammad has attained to Allāh (Exalted is He) in the space of three days!"

Shaikh Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī explained: "I abandoned this world on the first day, and I fled to the Hereafter on the second day. Then, on the third day, I sought Allāh (Exalted is He), seeking Him to the exclusion of everything apart from Him, and so I found Him."

Once he had undergone this transformation, his fame spread to the farthest horizons, signs of his nearness to Allāh (Exalted is He) became clearly apparent, and his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] were demonstrated in uninterrupted sequence. In answer to his supplication, Allāh (Exalted is He) would cure the blind-from-birth, the leper and the lunatic, just as He would bless him in the slightest matter of concern.

One day, while the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was sitting in the canyon [*baṭīḥa*], more than a hundred birds came flying by. They alighted all around him, and their voices were cacophonous, so he exclaimed: "O my Lord, these birds have seriously disturbed me!" He glanced toward the sky, and they all fell dead, every last one of them. "O my Lord," he said, "You are All-Knowing [*Anta A'lam*]. I did not wish for their death!" The birds immediately got up and flew away.

On one occasion, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) passed by a group of people who were serving wine to one another. They also had musical instruments with them, so he said: "O Allāh, make life pleasant for them in the Hereafter!" The wine turned into pure water, and Allāh cast fear upon them, so they started shouting at one another and tearing their clothes apart. Then they smashed those musical instruments, and repented at his hand. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

A man once came to him and said: “When you enter the presence of the Sovereign Lord [*Malik*], ask Him about me!” The Shaikh lowered his head in silence for a moment, then he said: “I asked Him about you, and He told me: ‘How excellent a servant, for he is ever turning [to Me] in repentance [*ni‘ma ‘l-‘abd: inna-hu awwāb*]!’<sup>165</sup> Tonight in your dream, you will see the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and he will tell you what I have just told you.”

The man later reported that he had indeed seen the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) that night, and he had said to him: “Shaikh Muḥammad [ash-Shunbukī] was speaking the truth, when he said that he had been told: ‘How excellent a servant, for he is ever turning [to Me] in repentance!’”

Shaikh Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī died in the evening time, in a place called al-Ḥaddādiyya, not far from al-Baṭā’ih. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, and may He be well pleased with him!



<sup>165</sup> This expression occurs in two verses of the Qur’ān:

And on David We bestowed Solomon.  
How excellent a servant! He was ever  
turning in repentance. (38:30)

An excellent servant indeed  
[was the Prophet Job], for he was ever  
turning in repentance! (38:44)

*wa wahabnā li-Dāwūda Sulaimān:*

*ni‘ma ‘l-‘abd:  
inna-hu awwāb.*

*ni‘ma ‘l-‘abd:  
inna-hu  
awwāb.*

### 3. Shaikh Abu'l-Wafā' Muḥammad Kākīs (A.H. 417–501)

As for that splendid chieftain, our master Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifin<sup>166</sup> Abu 'l-Wafā' Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Zaid al-Ḥalwānī, who is widely known al-Kākīs (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was the chieftain of the Shaikhs of 'Irāq, and the most prominent of them in his own time.

He was endowed with supernatural charismatic talents [*karāmāt khāriqa*], and leadership in this [spiritual] business devolved upon him in his day and age. A considerable number of the principal Shaikhs of 'Irāq received their training from him, including all of the following:

- Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hītī
- Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū
- Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥmān aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī
- Shaikh Maṭīr
- Shaikh Mājīd al-Kurdi
- Shaikh Aḥmad al-Baqlī, and many more besides.

Shaikh Abu 'l-Wafā' (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had a noble way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the Realities [*ahl al-Ḥaqā'iq*]. He had forty personal servants, drawn from the ranks of those who are endowed with remarkable spiritual states. The Shaikhs of 'Irāq (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) would often mention the fact that seventeen Sulṭāns were known to be his pupils. When his own Shaikh, Shaikh Muḥammad

<sup>166</sup> Tāj al-‘Ārifīn is an honorific title, meaning: “The Crown of those who know by direct experience.”

ash-Shunbukī accepted his pledge of allegiance, he said: “A bird has fallen into my net today, the like of which has never fallen into the net of any other Shaikh!”

At the outset of his career, he used to engage in highway robbery, until one of his raids became the occasion of his repentance. He attacked a ranch, which happened to be situated in the neighborhood of Shaikh ash-Shunbukī, and seized all its livestock. The ranchers came to the Shaikh, and said: “O our master, he seized our livestock, and we could not catch him,” so he told a servant of his: “Go and find him, and tell him: ‘Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī is summoning you to repent to Allāh (Exalted is He), and to return these cattle to their owners.’” The servant came to him, and fainted as soon as he caught sight of him. Then he recovered consciousness, and found that his head was resting on the knee of Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifin, who said to him: “What did the Shaikh tell you?” The servant replied: “My master is telling you to repent, and to return the cattle to their owners.”

“Yes indeed,” said the robber, “I shall repent.” Then he raised his head toward the heaven above, and said: “By your life, I repent!” Then he ripped his clothes apart, and returned the cattle to their owners. “Go to the Shaikh,” he told the servant, “and say to him: ‘Yes, he is coming.’” When the servant reported this to the Shaikh, each of the people present said: “O my master, he will not come!” “O yes,” said the Shaikh, “Abu ‘l-Wafā’ will surely come. He does not tell a lie.” Sure enough, he arrived at that very moment. The Shaikh stood up to welcome him, gave him a hug, accepted his pledge of allegiance, invested him with his gown, and sat him down at his side.

When the time of the noon prayer [*ẓuhr*] came around, and the muezzin [*mu’adhdhin*] gave the call to prayer, Shaikh Abu ‘l-Wafā’ said to him: “Wait patiently, until after the rooster of the Heavenly Throne [*dik al-‘Arsh*] has given the call to prayer!” When Shaikh ash-Shunbukī said: “O my son, can you also hear the rooster of the Heavenly Throne?” he replied: “O my master, for thirty years I have been hearing the rooster of the Heavenly Throne.” Shaikh ash-Shunbukī then said to him: “O Abu ‘l-Wafā’, Allāh (Exalted is He) will spread for you the table-mat of knowledge, and you will lecture to the people.”

Shaikh Abu 'l-Wafā' took his leave, and made his way to Baghdād. When he entered the city, the angelic herald proclaimed his arrival, calling from the sky: "Let everyone arise to welcome him!" The people thereupon came out to greet him, and they accorded him a truly magnificent reception.

The Shaikhs of al-Baṭā'ih would often say: "We find it quite astonishing, that anyone could mention Abu'l-Wafā' without passing his hand over his face, invoking the Name of Allāh (Exalted is He), and pronouncing a benediction on the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). How could anyone fail to lower his face in awe of him?"

It is reported that Shaikh 'Azzāz once saw the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in a dream, so he said to him: "O Messenger of Allāh, what can you tell me about Abu 'l-Wafā' (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him)?" He received the reply: "In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate [*Bismi'llāhi 'r-Raḥmāni 'r-Raḥīm*]. What can I say about someone whom all the communities [*umam*] will hail with admiration, on the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāma*]?"

According to traditional reports, Shaikh Abu 'l-Wafā' (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was of Kurdish origin, a member of the Narjisiyya tribe.

It was our master, Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who said: "At the door of the Truth, there is no other Kurdish man like Shaikh Abu 'l-Wafā'." It was also he who said: "At the start of the night, I was still a Persian, but I entered the next morning as an Arab." May Allāh be well pleased with them both!

In his work entitled "History To Rely On for Accounts of the Bygone" [*at-Ta'rīkh al-mu'tabar fī anbā' man ghabar*], the Chief Justice [*Qāḍi 'l-Quḍāt*] Mujir ad-Dīn al-'Ulaimī al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī has informed us:

"[His full name is] Sayyid Tāj al-'Ārifīn Abu 'l-Wafā' Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Zain ad-Dīn ibn Ḥasan ibn al-Murtaḍā al-Akbar-irḍ ibn Zaid ibn Zain al-'Ābidīn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusain ibn 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib (may Allāh be well pleased with him)

ash-Sharif al-Ḥusainī al-Qawsānī. This splendid chieftain was the Cardinal Pole [*Quṭb*] of his era, and the most erudite scholar of his day and age.”

“According to the most reliable account, he was born on the 12th of Rajab, in the year [A.H.] 417. As for his school of Islāmic law [*madhhab*], it can only be stated that some say he was a Ḥanbalī, while others say he was a Shāfi‘ī. He died on the 20th of Rabi‘ al-Awwal in the year [A.H.] 501, in Qalamīniyā, a small town on the outskirts of Baghdād. May Allāh be well pleased with him!” (Here ends the quotation.)

If this historical information is correct, Shaikh Abu ‘l-Wafā’ was a nobleman [*sharīf*], through his descent from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and as one of the progeny of aṭ-Ṭāhir ibn al-Aṭāyib. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!



#### 4.

### Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās (d. A.H. 525)

As for our master Shaikh Ḥammād ibn Muslim ibn Dāwūd ad-Dabbās (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of those scholars who are firmly rooted in the sciences of the Realities [*‘ulūm al-Ḥaqā’iq*]. Responsibility for the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] in Baghdād devolved upon him, and he was unanimously accepted as the leading expert in the investigation of mysterious spiritual receivings [*makhfiyyāt al-mawārid*]. The great majority of the Shaikhs of Baghdād became affiliated to him, in his day and age, as did most of the members of their Ṣūfī community.

He had a magnificent way of speaking about the Path [*Ṭarīq*] of the people devoted to spiritual development, and he was one of those from whom our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), and his companions, received instruction. He extolled the merits of the Shaikh, and related accounts of his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*].

Whenever Shaikh Abu ‘l-Wafā’ came to Baghdād, he used to lodge with Shaikh Ḥammād, whom he always treated with the most profound respect. All the Shaikhs of Baghdād held Shaikh Ḥammād in the highest esteem. They were always extremely courteous in his presence, and listened attentively to whatever he had to say.

On one occasion, Shaikh Ḥammād noticed that a certain military commander [*amīr*] was drunk, so he rebuked him. The commander responded by attacking him physically, so the Shaikh exclaimed: “O horse of Allāh, take him away!” His horse [*faras*] raced up to him immediately, like a flash of lightning, and the commander disappeared. “By the Might and Glory of Allāh,” said the Shaikh, “the horse has carried him off to the far side of Mount Qāf,<sup>167</sup> and from thence he will eventually be resurrected.”

<sup>167</sup> See note 47 on p. 81 above.

It is related that Shaikh Ḥammād once set out to visit the tomb of Shaikh Maʿrūf al-Karkhī<sup>168</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), but he heard the voice of a young woman, singing inside a house along the way, so he turned around and came back home. He gathered his family together, and said to them: “Because of what sin have we been afflicted?” They said: “Yesterday, we bought a food container, and it has a human image on it.” “It came after me from here!” cried the Shaikh, as he grabbed the container and erased the picture.

Shaikh Ḥammād once said: “The nearest of the roads to Allāh (Exalted is He) is the love of Him. The love of Him does not become pure, however, until all that remains of the lover is a spirit [*rūḥ*], without any self [*nafs*]. As long as the self is still present within him, he must love for the sake of Allāh (Exalted is He). Then, when the self becomes nonexistent, the genuine love of Allāh will arrive.”

It was Shaikh Abu ʿn-Najīb as-Suhrawardī who said: “One of the mamelukes [*mamālīk*] of the Caliph al-Mustarshid used to pay frequent visits to Shaikh Ḥammād. He refused to respond, however, when the Shaikh told him: ‘I see that you have a predestined assignment in nearness to Allāh (Exalted is He).’ He was too attached to his high-ranking post in the service of the Caliph. The Shaikh repeated what he had told him, but he still refused to respond, so the Shaikh said to him: “Allāh (Exalted is He) has charged me with the task of winning you over to Him, and I have commanded leprosy to overwhelm you.”

Before the Shaikh had finished speaking, the man’s whole body was stricken with leprosy, and the people present were utterly flabbergasted. The mameluke went off to see the Caliph, who sent for his physicians. The medical experts all agreed that his condition was incurable, so the Caliph showed him the nature of his imperial authority, by ordering his banishment from the palace.

“The banished leper came to Shaikh Ḥammād, kissed his feet, and complained to him about his terrible condition. He also committed himself to full compliance with any instructions he might give him, so the Shaikh stood up and invested him with his own gown. His body immediately became like silver, and the leprosy disappeared completely. He conceived the notion of returning to the Caliph the very next day, but the Shaikh tapped him on the forehead, and drew

<sup>168</sup> See note 39 on p. 71 above.

a line with his finger. The leprosy came back at once, and the Shaikh told him: "This will prevent you entering the Caliph's presence." He stayed loyal to the service of the Shaikh, until the day he died."

The aforementioned Shaikh Abu 'n-Najīb also said: "Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās [the Beekeeper] is one of the finest of all the Shaikhs I have met in Baghdād. He was the first Shaikh to make me truly aware of Allāh (Exalted is He). Due to his blessed grace, no wasp or fly can enter his beehive [*dabāsa*]."

It was Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Abū Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn Qaza'li al-Baghdādī, the grandson of al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn al-Jawzī, who said: "Even if al-Ḥammād did not possess all the virtues attributed to him, with regard to his pious asceticism, his spiritual path, and his penetrating insight, and if he had nothing else to his credit, except that Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir was one of his pupils, that would surely be quite enough. May Allāh be well pleased with them both!"

Shaikh Ḥammād (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was a native of the Syrian countryside. He settled in the Muẓaffariyya district of Baghdād, and lived there till he died, in the year [A.H.] 525. He was buried in the graveyard of ash-Shawnīziyya. (Some say that he was buried in Damascus, in the Bāb al-Mawṣilī graveyard, but the former statement is the one that is correct.) May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



## 5. Shaikh ‘Azzāz ibn Mustawda‘ al-Baṭā’ihī

Shaikh ‘Azzāz ibn Mustawda‘ al-Baṭā’ihī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was one of the most prominent and distinguished Shaikhs of ‘Irāq. Leadership in this [spiritual] business devolved upon him, making him responsible for the training of the spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] in al-Baṭā’ihī. He attracted a considerable following among the righteous holders of high rank, who turned to him for knowledge of the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*], and who derived great benefit from his instruction. More than a few Shaikhs obtained their qualifications in his fellowship. His teaching was propagated by a large number of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, and his students included many of those whose feet are firmly planted in this business. The scholars [*‘ulamā’*] and the Shaikhs were unanimous in according him the highest honor and respect, and visiting him was one of their top priorities.

Shaikh ‘Azzāz was handsome in all his attributes. He was a dedicated follower of the rules of the Sacred Law [*Shar‘*] and the Sunna, ever ready to comply with Allāh’s decrees. Great was his devotion to the spiritual struggle [*mujāhada*], to vigilant awareness [*murāqaba*], and to following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors [*salaf*], both in private and in public. He had a splendid way of speaking, in the language of those who learn by direct experience [*ahl al-ma‘ārif*]. Because of his influence, spirits [*arwāh*] were graced with ardent yearnings [*ashwāq*], so that, when they felt the stings of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*], they would cling tight to the hems of direct witnessing.

He regarded nothing but the Truth [*Ḥaqq*] as an object worthy of worship [*ma‘būd*]. He was thoroughly convinced that no novelty [*ḥādith*], with its defective attributes, could ever supersede the

Eternally Preexistent [*Qadīm*], for the attributes of the Truth would always overtake it. He believed that the hearts of the lovers fly toward the Lord of Truth on the wings of direct knowledge [*ma'rifa*], traveling with the confidence of love, attracted by the lights of His Holiness [*Quds*] toward the lights of His intimate friendship. He believed that the sound heart is guided from all sides: from underneath it, toward fulfillment [*wafā*]; from above it, toward purity [*ṣafā*]; from its right side, toward generous giving [*aṭā*]; from its left side, toward destiny [*manā*]; from in front of it, toward the Meeting [*Liqā*]; and from behind it, toward everlasting life [*baqā*].

The *jinn* used to converse with him, and the lions were friendly in his company. In the words of Shaikh 'Abd al-Laṭīf: "When Shaikh 'Azzāz took a stroll among the date palms, and felt an appetite for ripe dates, whole clusters would dangle in front of him. Then, when he had eaten his fill, they would return to their normal condition."

It was his personal servant, the splendid Shaikh Abu 'l-Mu'ammār Ismā'il al-Wāsiṭī, who said: "I once heard our own Shaikh, Shaikh 'Azzāz (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say:

"In the early stage of my development, I experienced a spiritual state, in which I remained immersed for forty days. I neither ate nor drank, and I could not tell the difference between one thing and another. Then I returned to my ordinary senses, but only briefly, before I was distracted from my self-awareness for another seventeen days. Then I came back to normality, and my lower self [*nafs*] started hankering after warm wheat bread, grilled fish, and sweet water from a brand-new red flask. I was on the bank of the river, and I noticed some black shapes in the middle of the gulf. When they came close to me, I saw that they were three fishes. One of them had two loaves on its back. On the back of another, there was a dish containing a grilled fish. On the back of the third, there was a brand-new red flask, filled with water.

"The waves kept pounding them from right and left, until they reached me on the shore. Each of the fishes then deposited its load in front of me, just as one human being would approach another human being, and lay something he wanted down in front of him. Then they returned to the place from which they had come. I picked up the two loaves, and lo and behold, they consisted of wheat bread,

and their crusts were puffed up. I ate some of the bread and part of the grilled fish, and drank some water from the flask. Never in this world had I tasted water so sweet! By the time I had taken my fill of that food and drink, its quantity was reduced by no more than a tenth. I left the remainder behind, and went on my way.”

According to one report, Shaikh ‘Azzāz (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once came upon a lion, which had just savaged a young man and broken his leg. The Shaikh yelled at the beast, and it turned away and fled. Then he picked up a pebble from the ground, the size of a bean, and threw it at the lion. The beast fell dead on the spot. Then he came to the young man, reconnected the broken bone in his leg, and passed his hand over it. The damage was completely repaired, so the young man got up and ran off to join his family

Shaikh ‘Azzāz (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) died before the death of Shaikh Maṣṣūr al-Baṭā’ihī, of whom we shall have more to say [in the next section]. I have not been able to ascertain the date of his birth, nor that of his death. May Allāh be well pleased with him!<sup>169</sup>



<sup>169</sup> At this point in the original text, the author concludes with an explanation, in technical Arabic terminology, of the spelling and pronunciation of the name ‘Azzāz: “The ‘*ain* is undotted [otherwise it would be a *ghain*]. The letter *zāy* occurs twice, with doubling [*tashdīd*] of the first of the two, which is followed by the *alif* [to indicate the long vowel -ā-].”

## 6. Shaikh Maṣṣūr al-Baṭā'ihī (d. A.H. 540/1145 C.E.)<sup>170</sup>

**T**he great Shaikh Maṣṣūr al-Baṭā'ihī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was one of the most remarkable of all the Shaikhs in al-Baṭā'ih, and one of their most prominent figures. He was handsome and brilliant, a perfect example of refined behavior, and firmly committed to the path of the righteous predecessors [*ṭarīq as-salaf*]. While observing the decrees of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), both in hardship and in comfort, he maintained a relaxed and friendly attitude toward those whom he guided along the routes of his spiritual path. He was someone whose prayer was sure to be answered, and he was endowed with a remarkable spiritual state.

While his mother was pregnant with him, she once entered the presence of his Shaikh-to-be, Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ibn ash-Shunbukī, to whom she was related. He stood up to greet her, then repeated the gesture. When someone asked him why he had done so, he said: "I am standing in honor of the fetus [*janīn*] in her womb, for he is one of those drawn near to Allāh (Exalted is He). He is one of the holders of high spiritual stations, and his importance is tremendous." He received his training (may Allāh be well pleased with him) from Shaikh ash-Shunbukī.

When someone asked Shaikh Maṣṣūr about love [*maḥabba*], he said: "The lover is inebriated in his hangover [*khumār*], and he is bewildered in his drinking. If he emerges from intoxication, it is only to enter a state of bewilderment, and if he emerges from a state of bewilderment, it is only to enter a state of intoxication." Then he uttered these poetic verses:

Love is an intoxication, and its hangover is a ruination,  
a fertile ground for disaster and terminal disease.

<sup>170</sup> The year of Shaikh Maṣṣūr's death is not mentioned in the Arabic text of *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*. The date given here is supplied by J. Spencer Trimingham (*The Sufi Orders in Islam*, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 37).

Love, like death, annihilates every enamored soul,  
and ruination destroys anyone who tastes it.

In love died those who were sincere in their affection;  
had they not loved, they would neither have died nor perished.

Then he went over to a green tree, which stood flourishing nearby. He breathed a sigh beside it, and the tree immediately withered and shed all its leaves. Shaikh Maṣṣūr (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) then uttered these poetic verses:

If the lands and all the trees therein were  
devastated by passion, they would not be watered by rain.

If the earth were to taste the love of Allāh,  
the fruit would be burned from its trees by the passion therein.

Their branches would be stripped of every leaf,  
bombarded by sparks from the heat of the fire of passion.

So neither iron nor mountain rock is stronger  
than the human being, in bearing love and tribulation.

Shaikh Maṣṣūr (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled by the river Daqlā', in the region of al-Baṭā'ih, and there he resided until he died. His tomb is plainly visible, and visits are often paid to it.

He bequeathed his succession to his sister's son, Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā'ī, of whom we shall have more to say [in the next section]. His wife said to him: "Appoint your own son as your successor!" but he said: "[No, I must appoint] my sister's son, Aḥmad." When his wife repeated her words, he said to his sister's son and to his own son: "Bring me some *najīl* [a plant eaten by camels]." His own son brought him a large quantity of *najīl*, but his sister's son brought him nothing at all. "O Aḥmad," he said to his nephew, "why did you not bring me anything?" Aḥmad replied: "I found it all glorifying [the Lord],<sup>171</sup> so I felt unable to cut anything off from it." The Shaikh then said to his wife: "More than once, I asked [in my prayers] that it might be my own son, but I was told: 'No, it must be your sister's son, Aḥmad!'" May Allāh be well pleased with them both!

<sup>171</sup> Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā'ī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had evidently experienced the reality of the Qur'ānic verse [āya]:

The seven heavens and the earth, and all therein, do glorify Him.  
*tusabbiḥu la-hu 's-samāwātu 's-sab'u wa 'l-arḍu wa man fi-hinn:*

There is not a thing that does not celebrate His praise.  
*wa in min shai' in illā yusabbiḥu bi-ḥamdi-hi. (17:44)*

## 7. Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifāʿī (ca. A.H. 500–ca. 580)<sup>172</sup>

As for that great chieftain, the Reviver of the Religion [*Muḥyi 'd-Dīn*], the chieftain of those who learn by direct experience [*sayyid al-ʿarīfīn*], Abu 'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥāzim ar-Rifāʿī al-Maghribī al-Baṭāʾihī, his surname “al-Maghribī” indicates that he was a Westerner by origin, while his surname “al-Baṭāʾihī” indicates that al-Baṭāʾih [in ʿIrāq] was his birthplace and his home. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifāʿī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was a man of tremendous worth and very great importance. It is quite impossible to give an adequate account of his magnificent status and his celebrated spiritual quality. He is one of the four who have been able to heal the blind-from-birth and the leper, and to restore the dead to life, by the leave of Allāh (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He). He is also one of those whose fame has spread throughout this world. He attracted countless pupils, in every region and country. In all the major cities of the Muslims, not a single locality is without a convent [*ḡāwīya*], or some such place, officially associated with his followers.

Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifāʿī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was intensely active in the spiritual struggle [*mujaḥada*]. He was one of those who conquer their spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] and master their innermost beings [*asrār*]. Leadership devolved upon him in the sciences of the spiritual path [*ʿulūm at-ṭarīq*], the interpretation [*sharḥ*] of the spiritual states experienced by the people [of that path], and the resolution of difficult problems encountered in their stages of development. He had a noble way of speaking, and his prestige was exalted among the people of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*]. Needless to say, his fame became widespread, yet Shaikh Aḥmad (may Allāh be well

<sup>172</sup> According to some authorities, the date of his birth was A.H. 512.

pleased with him) was always modestly humble, good-natured, and detached from this world. He never kept anything stored away.

He was once asked to comment on his saying: “Loneliness is better than having a bad companion [*al-wahdatu khairun min jalāsi ‘s-sū’*],” so he explained: “In this time of ours, it is also better than having a righteous companion, unless he is one of those who are truly worthy of notice, so that looking at him is a positive remedy. There is no way to attain salvation, except through the affirmation of Oneness [*tawhīd*].”

Concerning the need to concentrate entirely on Allāh, to flee from everything apart from Him, and to abandon everything other than Him, Shaikh Aḥmad (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said [in poetic verse]:

If only You are sweet, even when life is bitter,  
and if only You are well pleased, when humans are enraged!

If only what exists between me and You can prosper,  
while between me and the worlds there lies a barren waste!

When love from You is truly felt, it all becomes so easy,  
and everything above the dust is nothing more than dust.

In the *Ta’rikh* [History] of Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn Abu ‘l-Muẓaffar, the grandson of al-Jawzī, the author informs us: “I heard the following story from one of our Shaikhs, who said:

“I was in the presence of Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī, on the night of mid-Sha‘bān, and approximately one hundred people were assembled in his company. When I said to him: “This is an enormous gathering!” he replied: “I shall be resurrected in the same way as [Pharaoh’s prime minister] Hāmān,<sup>173</sup> if it so much as crosses my mind that I am the conductor of this particular gathering!”

We owe this next report to the excellent Shaikh Abu ‘l-Faraj ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Alī ar-Rifā‘ī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), the son of his [Shaikh Aḥmad’s] sister. He said:

“One day, from where I was sitting, I could see the Shaikh and I could hear him when he spoke. He was sitting by himself, when a man came down out of the air, and sat in front of him. ‘Welcome to the delegation [*wafd*] from the East!’ said the Shaikh, and the visitor told him: ‘For twenty days, I have had nothing to eat or drink. I wish that you would provide me with the meal I fancy.’ When the Shaikh

<sup>173</sup> In other words, “I shall be doomed to the Fire of Hell.”

asked him: ‘And what is it that you fancy?’ he looked up into the atmosphere, where five flying geese appeared. ‘I would like one of these, roasted,’ he said, ‘as well as two loaves of wheat bread, and a glass of cold water.’

“‘That you shall have,’ said the Shaikh. Then he stared at those geese, and said: ‘Satisfy the man’s appetite, and be quick about it!’ Before he had finished speaking, one of them dropped down in front of him, already roasted. Then the Shaikh stretched his hand toward two stones that were lying by his side. When he set them in front of him, they had turned into two warm loaves, of the finest-looking bread. Then he stretched his hand into the air above, and lo and behold, his hand was holding a red glass, with water inside it.

“The man ate and drank, then went off through the air, back to wherever he had come from. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) got up, took the bones of the goose in his left hand, and passed his right hand over them, saying: ‘O scattered bones and separated joints, away you go! Fly away, by the command of Allāh (Exalted is He), in the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate [*Bismi ’llāhi ’r-Raḥmāni ’r-Raḥīm*].’ Away went the goose, completely restored to its former condition. It flew off into the atmosphere, until it disappeared from my view. May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!”

In his book entitled “Illumination Concerning the Possibility of Seeing a Vision of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace)” [*at-Tanwīr fī imkān ru’yat an-Nabī (ṣalla ’llāhu ‘alai-hi wa sallam)*], Shaikh Jalāl ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān as-Suyūṭī informs us:

“When my master, Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rifāʿī, stood facing toward the noble chamber [of the Prophet’s tomb], he uttered these poetic verses:

In the state of remoteness, my spirit I would send  
to kiss the ground on my behalf, for it is my deputy.

The turn of visible forms has now come around,  
so extend your right hand, that my lip may touch it.

“The [Prophet’s] noble hand then emerged, and he kissed it.”

One of the Shaikh’s companions said that he saw him, several times

in his dreams, in a seat of truthfulness [*fī maq'adi ṣidqin*],<sup>174</sup> but he did not tell him about it. The Shaikh had a wife with a wicked tongue, who used to make a fool of him and hurt his feelings. One day, when the person who had seen him in a seat of truthfulness came to visit him, he saw that the Shaikh's wife had an oven poker in her hand, and that she was using it to beat her husband on his shoulders, so that his shirt was blackened. The Shaikh was enduring this assault in silence, but the man became alarmed, so he went and got together with some of his companions. "O my people," he said, "this is what is happening to the Shaikh, at the hands of that woman, but you have nothing to say!"

One of them told him: "Her dower [*mahr*]<sup>175</sup> is five hundred *dinārs* [gold coins], but the Shaikh is a pauper [*faqīr*]." The man then went and collected five hundred *dinārs*. He put the money in a porcelain bowl, brought it to the Shaikh, and set it down in front of him. "What is this?" asked the Shaikh, so he told him: "It is the dower of this wretched woman, who has treated you like such-and-such and such-and-such." The Shaikh said with a smile: "But for my patient endurance of her beating and her savage tongue, you would not have seen me in a seat of truthfulness [*fī maq'adi ṣidqin*]!" May Allāh be well pleased with him!

In the *Ta'rikh* [History] of Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn, the grandson of al-Jawzī, the author informs us:

"Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad Abu 'l-'Abbās ibn ar-Rifā'ī was the Shaikh of the Baṭā'ihīs. He used to reside in Umm 'Ubaida. He was endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] and high spiritual stations. His companions perform death-defying feats, such as riding on lions and playing with snakes. One of them climbs to the top of the highest date palm, then throws himself down onto the ground, without feeling any pain. They hold a festival gathering [*mawsim*] every year, and it attracts a huge crowd of people."

<sup>174</sup> An allusion to Q. 54:54,55:

Surely the righteous will dwell amid gardens and a river,  
inna 'l-muttaqīna fī jannātīn wa naḥar:

in a seat of truthfulness, in the presence of a King All-Powerful.  
fī maq'adi ṣidqin 'inda Malīkin Muqtadīr.

<sup>175</sup> The Islāmic law of marriage requires the husband, not the wife, to provide the dower (which is not merely a "nuptial gift," but an essential element in the marriage contract).

In his work entitled “History To Rely On for Accounts of the Bygone” [*at-Taʾrīkh al-muʿtabar fī anḇāʾ man ʿabar*], the Chief Justice [Qāḍī ʿl-Quḍāt] Muḥir ad-Dīn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-ʿUmarī al-ʿUlaimī al-Ḥanbalī al-Maqdisī has informed us:

“As for Abu ʿl-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Abi ʿl-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Abi ʿl-ʿAbbās Aḥmad, generally known as Ibn ar-Rifāʿī, he belonged to the Shāfiʿī school of Islāmic law [*madhhab*]. A Westerner by family origin, he settled in the region of al-Baṭāʾih, in a village called Umm ʿUbaida. Of his many poems, one of the most famous begins with the verse:

When my night grows dark, my heart begins to ache.  
Remembering you,<sup>176</sup> I lament as the ringdoves lament.

“He died on Thursday the 12th of Jumādā ʿl-Ūlā, in the year [A.H.] 580, in Umm ʿUbaida, at about the age of ninety. The surname ʿar-Rifāʿī<sup>177</sup> indicates his family connection to a man in the West, called Rifāʿa. Umm ʿUbaida and al-Baṭāʾih are country districts between Wāsiṭ and al-Baṣra, widely known in ʿIrāq.”

It was that highly erudite scholar, Shams ad-Dīn ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn ad-Dimashqī, who said: “Concerning my master, the great Shaikh Muḥyi ʿd-Dīn Sulṭān al-ʿĀrifin Abu ʿl-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ar-Rifāʿī, we have not received any evidence to support the assertion that he fathered more than one of the accepted Imāms. Nor do I know of any sound genealogy linking him to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, or to any of the excellent offspring of the latter. In our view, based on all that has come to our knowledge, and to that of the leading Qurʾān-memorizers [*ḥuffāẓ*], he is correctly referred to as: Abu ʿl-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ash-Shaikh Abu ʿl-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥāzim ibn ʿAlī ibn Rifāʿa al-Maghribī-al-aṣl al-ʿIrāqī al-Baṭāʾihī ar-Rifāʿī. (His final surname links him to Rifāʿa, the earliest of his known paternal ancestors.)

“His father Abu ʿl-Ḥasan (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) came from the regions of the West, and settled in the al-Baṭāʾih district of ʿIrāq, in a village called Umm ʿUbaida. Then he married

<sup>176</sup> Since the “you” is plural in the Arabic, the poem is no doubt addressed to absent companions.

<sup>177</sup> At this point in the original, unvoweled text, the author notes (in Arabic terminology) that the letter <R> is followed by the short vowel <-i> [*bi-kasr ar-rāʾ*].

the sister of Shaikh Maṣṣūr az-Zāhid [the Ascetic], and she conceived his son, Shaikh Aḥmad. His father died while his mother was pregnant with him, and she gave birth to him in the month of Muḥarram of the year [A.H.] 500. His maternal uncle then became his guardian, and it was from him that he received his education, as well as from Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī, the ascetic Qur'ān-reciter, among others.

"Shaikh Aḥmad became the exemplary guide of those who learn by direct experience [*qudwat al-ʿarīfīn*], and one of the famous saints [*awliyāʾ*]. He died on a Thursday in Jumādā 'l-Ūlā, in the year [A.H.] 578, in al-Baṭā'ih." (Here ends the abridged quotation from the historian's work. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!)

I have transcribed the following genealogy from a work compiled, in his own handwriting, by my paternal grandfather, the Chief Justice [*Qāḍī 'l-Quḍāt*] Jamāl ad-Dīn Abu 'l-Maḥāsin Yūsuf at-Tādifi ar-Rafī'ī al-Anṣārī al-Ḥanbalī (may Allāh enfold him in His mercy):

"He is properly referred to as Aḥmad 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥāzim ibn 'Alī ibn Thābit ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥusain al-Asghar ibn al-Mahdī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Mūsā ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥīm ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā al-Kāẓim ibn Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq ibn Muḥammad al-Bāqir ibn 'Alī Zain al-ʿĀbidīn ibn al-Ḥusain ibn 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib."



## 8. Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir (d. ca. A.H. 555)

As for Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Mūsā ibn Marwān ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Marwān al-Umawī ash-Shāmī al-Hakkārī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), his surname “ash-Shāmī” indicates that he was Syrian by family origin and place of birth, while his surname “al-Hakkārī” indicates that he settled in al-Hakkār [in ‘Irāq].

He was one of the most splendid Shaikhs of the regions of the East, one of the greatest in importance, and one of the highest in degree. He is revered as one of the pillars of this Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*], and one of its most eminent scholars. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

He made remarkable progress in the spiritual struggle [*mujāhada*], while still a novice, and attained to a level that is very hard to achieve. Few of the Shaikhs were capable of matching his performance. Our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir admired him greatly, frequently extolled his merit, and acknowledged his predominance over the saints [*awliyā’*]. It was he who said: “If Prophethood [*Nubuwwa*] could be attained by sheer dedication to the spiritual struggle [*mujāhada*], Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir would have attained it!”

He spent the first part of his career as a lonely wanderer. During a lengthy sojourn in the caverns, the mountains and the deserts, he subjected his lower self [*nafs*] to all kinds of spiritual discipline. The snakes, the reptiles and the savage beasts became accustomed to his presence in their midst.

In all the regions of the East, Shaikh ‘Adī came to assume a leading rôle in the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] and those who learn by direct experience [*‘arīfīn*]. Many of the saints [*awliyā’*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them) became his pupils. Of those

endowed with remarkable spiritual states, more than a few received their education in his fellowship. A vast array of Shaikhs became affiliated to him. It was he who performed the funeral ablution for our master, Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifīn [Abu’l-Wafā’ Muḥammad Kākīs]<sup>178</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), when he died.

☞ Some of Shaikh ‘Adī’s wise and eloquent sayings. ☞

Shaikh ‘Adī received visits from every district and country. He had an exquisite way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the Realities [*ahl al-Ḥaqā’iq*]. Here are some good examples:

• The Shaikh is he who gathers you together in his presence, takes care of you in his absence, trains you by means of his character, teaches you by lowering his gaze in silence, and enlightens your inner being [*bāṭin*] by means of his illumination. The seeker [*murīd*] is he who makes his light shine in the company of the paupers [*fuqarā’*], through intimate friendship and a cheerful disposition; in the company of the Ṣūfis, through good behavior, self-effacement, excellence of moral conduct, and modest humility in every situation; in the company of the religious scholars [*‘ulamā’*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them all), by listening with careful attention; in the company of those endowed with direct insight [*ma‘rifa*], by maintaining a calm and quiet state; and in the company of holders of high stations, through the affirmation of Divine Oneness [*tawḥīd*].”

• Hey, you there! The spiritual deputies [*budalā’*] did not come to be spiritual deputies through eating, drinking, sleeping, and indulging in verbal assault and physical aggression. They only reached that position through spiritual struggles [*mujāhadāt*] and serious exercises [*riyādāt*], because he who dies [to this world] does not lead an ordinary life. If his annihilation [*talaf*] is for the sake of Allāh (Exalted is He), his succession [*khalaf*] is the responsibility of Allāh (Exalted is He). If he draws near to Allāh (Exalted is He) through the annihilation of his personal identity [*nafs*], Allāh will set Himself in charge of his succession.

<sup>178</sup> See p. 351 above.

We shall hurl the lower selves against their dreaded terror,  
to see what happens to their aspiration and their hopes.

If they are safe and sound, they will obtain their wishes,  
and if they perish, they must have reached their appointed terms.

•Hey, you there! If you are slain, you will be one of our troops.  
If you perish, you will be in that condition with us. If you survive,  
your life will be that of the blissful [*su'adā'*]. If you die, your death  
will be that of the martyrs [*shuhadā'*].

•Shaikh 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said:  
“Allāh (Exalted is He) has told us:

And as for those who strive in Our cause,  
*wa 'lladhīna jāhadū fī-nā*

surely We shall guide them in Our ways.  
*la-nahdiyanna-hum subula-nā:*

Allāh is surely with those who do good.  
*wa inna 'llāha la-ma'a 'l-muḥsinīn. (29:69)”*

Then he uttered this poetic verse:

You wish to reach the highest heights at a bargain price,  
yet many are stung by bees without getting honey to eat!

### ☞ Accounts of Shaikh 'Adī's supernatural exploits [*khāriqāt*]. ☞

It is related that Abū Isrā'īl Ya'qūb ibn 'Abd al-Muqtadir as-Sā'ih  
[the Wanderer] spent three years in lonely isolation in the mountains,  
until he grew a second skin. A wolf came and licked him, until it left  
him like the pith of the palm tree [*jummāra*]. Astonishment  
overwhelmed him, so he looked at the wolf askance, and it urinated  
on him. He said to himself: “If only Allāh would send me a saintly  
protector [*walī*]!” Shaikh 'Adī appeared immediately by his side,  
but, to his dismay, he did not salute him with the greeting of peace.  
The Shaikh told him: “We do not offer salutation [*salām*] and greeting  
[*tarḥāb*] to someone who is urinated upon by wolves!”

Abū Isrā'īl then gave him a full account of what had happened to  
him, and appealed to him to bring it to an end. The Shaikh responded  
by striking a boulder with his foot, and the rock erupted with the

water of the Nile. He kicked another, and a pomegranate tree sprouted from it. "I am 'Adī," he told the tree, "so grow, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He)—one day sweet, and one day sour." Then he said: "O Abū Isrā'īl, you must stay here. Eat from this tree, and drink from this fountain. If you ever need me, just mention my name, and I shall come to you." The Shaikh then left him and went on his way, so Abū Isrā'īl remained in that situation for a period of several years.

Shaikh 'Umar al-Qaiṣī has told us: "I worked for seven years as the personal servant of Shaikh 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and I witnessed some of his supernatural exploits [*khāriqāt*]. He said to me one day: 'Go to the sixth island in the Encircling Ocean. There you will find a mosque [*masjid*], which you must enter. You will see a Shaikh inside it, so you must say to him: "'Adī is telling you: 'Beware of raising objections, and do not choose anything for yourself, so long as any self-will is involved in the choice.'"

"He prodded me between my shoulders, and I saw the place and the Shaikh. When I told him [what Shaikh 'Adī had said], he burst into tears, and invoked a blessing upon him. He said to me: 'One of the seven élite [*khawāṣṣ*] is now in the throes of death, and my self-will [*irāda*] was eager for me to take his place.' Then Shaikh 'Adī nudged me again, and I found myself back in the convent [*zāwiya*]."

It was Shaikh Rajā' al-Bāristaqī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: "Shaikh 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) left the convent [*zāwiya*] one day, and walked toward a country estate. He turned to me and said: 'O Rajā', can you not hear the occupant of that grave, appealing to me for help?' He pointed his blessed hand toward a grave, so I looked, and saw a puff of smoke rising out of the grave. Then the Shaikh walked on, until he stood by the grave. He kept beseeching Allāh (Exalted is He), until I noticed that the smoke had stopped. Then he turned to me and said: 'O Rajā', the man buried here has been forgiven, and the torment has been lifted from him.'

"Then the Shaikh drew very close to the grave, and cried out in Kurdish: 'O Ḥusain, *khoshā khoshā*?'—meaning, 'Are you well?' 'Yes,' came the reply, 'I am well, and the torment has been lifted from

me.' I heard that spoken from inside the grave. Then we returned to the convent [*zāwiya*]."

The aforementioned Abū Isrā'īl also said: "I once asked the Shaikh for permission to travel to 'Abbādān. When I bade him farewell, he said: 'O Abū Isrā'īl, if you see a frightening lion along your way, you must say to it: "'Adī ibn Musāfir is telling you: 'Get away from me!'" That will make it go away. If you see the terror of the ocean and its waves, you must say: 'O waves, 'Adī is telling you to calm down.' They will promptly calm down."

"Whenever I encountered any lions, or other wild beasts, I would tell them what the Shaikh had said, and they would go away. Once, when I was sailing on the Sea of Baṣra, a fierce wind blew upon us, and the waves rose menacingly high. We were on the very brink of destruction, so I repeated what the Shaikh had said. The wind abated at once, and the water turned clear and calm."

It was Shaikh 'Umar who said: "We were in the presence of Shaikh 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) one day, when he had just performed the afternoon prayer [*ṣalāt al-‘aṣr*]. He signaled to the leading chanter [*ḥādī*], who uttered some poetic verses. Several spiritual paupers [*fuqarā'*] were among those in attendance, so Shaikh 'Adī kept standing up and sitting down [as he greeted them and made them comfortable]. He remained in a cheerful mood, until the time of sunset [*maghrib*] came around. A man stood up and gave the call to prayer, and the Shaikh became annoyed. Beating his breast, he said to the man: "What did you mean by giving us your call to prayer [*adhān*]? We were up there on the Heavenly Throne [*'Arsh*], and you have dumped us down here on the carpet [*farsh*]!"

Shaikh 'Umar also said: "We were in the presence of Shaikh 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), when a party of visitors arrived, consisting of Kurds and Būzīs.<sup>179</sup> One of their number was a man called al-Khaṭīb [the Preacher] Ḥusain, to whom the Shaikh said: 'O Ḥusain, come along, you and the whole group, so that we can shift some stones and build a wall for the garden.' The Shaikh stood up, and the whole group stood up with him. Then the Shaikh climbed up to the crest of the hill, where he set about splitting stones and rolling them down.

<sup>179</sup> Perhaps from the Black Sea region of Bozdoghan.

“While the visitors were carrying the stones to the work site, a chunk of rock crashed into one of the men. It struck him so hard that his flesh became mingled with his bone, and he was pinned to the ground. He died there and then, so al-Khaṭīb Ḥusain cried out: ‘O Shaikh, so-and-so has passed on to the mercy of Allāh (Exalted is He)!’ The Shaikh climbed down from the crest of the hill, and approached the stricken man. He raised his hands toward the heaven above, and offered a prayer of supplication for him. The man got up alive, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He), as if nothing had done him any harm.”

It is related that Emir Ibrāhīm al-Mihrānī, commander of the fortress of al-Jarrāhiyya, was present one day in the company of Shaikh ‘Adī, along with a group of Ṣūfī paupers [*fuqarā*]. The Emir loved the Shaikh very dearly, and he also loved the spiritual paupers, though he regarded no one as equal in rank to Shaikh ‘Adī. The Ṣūfis were present with him, on this occasion, because Emir Ibrāhīm had told them about the charismatic talents and exploits [*manāqib*] of Shaikh ‘Adī, and they had said: “We simply must get to meet him. We need to ask him some searching questions, in order to test his credibility.”

As soon as they had seated themselves in the presence of the Shaikh, having saluted him with the greeting of peace, one of them tried to start a conversation with the Shaikh, but he remained silent. The speaker was convinced that the Shaikh’s silence must be due to a lack of knowledge. The Shaikh became annoyed, for he was well aware of the speaker’s intention. He turned to the assembled company, and said: “Allāh (Exalted is He) has empowered certain of His servants, so that, if one of them told these two mountains to join together, they would do so.”

The Ṣūfis looked toward the two mountains, and saw that they had joined together and become a single mountain. On witnessing this sight, the Ṣūfis fell at his feet, while he remained engrossed, until the spiritual state departed from him. The Shaikh pointed his hand toward the two mountains, and they returned to their former condition. He treated the Ṣūfis kindly, and they repented at his hand. They became enrolled among his students, then they took their leave and went on their way.

It was Shaikh 'Umar who said: "One day, while I was in the presence of the Shaikh, the conversation was about the righteous, and what can result from their spiritual states. Shaikh 'Adī said: 'Here is a man who can heal the blind-from-birth, the leper, and the victim of elephantiasis, yet he does not lay claim to Prophethood [*Nubuwwa*].' This struck me as a highly presumptuous statement, so I took my leave of the Shaikh.

"When I set out to visit him again, a few days later, I was still feeling the impact of what I had heard from him. As soon as I arrived, and saluted him with the greeting of peace, the Shaikh said to me: 'O 'Umar, would you be willing to accompany me on a journey, with the stipulation that you must not engage in conversation with anyone we meet?' 'To hear is to obey!' said I, so the Shaikh set out on his journey, and I followed him, until we came to an enormous desert. Hunger affected me badly, so I split off from the Shaikh, who turned to me and said: 'O 'Umar, you have given up walking!' 'O my master,' I told him, 'I have collapsed from hunger.' The Shaikh then started combing the ground for carob beans [*khurnūb*], which had dried on the gum-arabic tree [*umm ghailān*]. He popped them into my mouth, and I was able to eat them, for I found them fresh and moist.

"As soon as I had satisfied my hunger, and felt myself reinvigorated, the Shaikh pressed on with his journey. Meanwhile, since my curiosity had been aroused by the carob beans, I picked one up and put it in my mouth. It created a bitter taste in my mouth, so I quickly threw it away. The Shaikh turned to me and said: 'O backslider!' 'Yes,' I agreed, 'I confess to being a backslider.' Then, before we had traveled very far, we came upon a village, where a tree stood close to a nearby source of water. There was a young man underneath the tree, a blind, emaciated leper. As soon as I caught sight of him, I recalled that earlier saying of the Shaikh, and I said to myself: 'If there is any validity to his claim, he will cure this invalid.'

"The Shaikh turned to me and said: 'O 'Umar, what thought has just crossed your mind?' To this I replied: 'In deference to the place of Allāh (Exalted is He) in your heart, and in deference to 'Uqail al-Manjabī and Shaikh Maslama, I simply implored Allāh (Exalted is He) to heal this young man.' 'O 'Umar,' said the Shaikh, 'do not rend

your veil [of silence], for you solemnly swore to keep it intact!’ He went down into the well, and performed his ritual ablution [*wuḍū’*]. Then he reemerged, turned to face the *Qibla*, and performed two cycles of ritual prayer [*rak’atain*]. [Before he began his prayer] he said: ‘When you see that I have prostrated myself, and offered a supplication, you must support me by saying “*Āmīn*.”’

‘As soon as the Shaikh had made his plea, I duly said ‘*Amīn*’ to his supplication [*du‘ā’*]. Then he stood up, passed his blessed hand over the young man, and said to him: ‘Arise, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He)!’ The youth got up at once, and started running, as if there had never been anything wrong with him. He told the people of the village: ‘Two men came by me, and one of them passed his hand over me, so now I am cured!’ The villagers came pouring out toward us, but the Shaikh sat me down in front of him, as soon as he saw them, and covered me with his loose sleeve, so they did not see us. Once they had returned to the village, the Shaikh got up and headed for home. I followed him for a short distance, and there we were, back at the convent [*zāwiya*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him!’

On one occasion, as we learn from another report, Shaikh ‘Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was at the door of his convent [*zāwiya*], which was in the precincts of the congregational mosque [*jāmi‘*] of Bārīstaḡ. Many people had come to attend his session. He signaled to the leading chanter [*ḥādī*], who started reciting poetic verses. The paupers joined in the spiritual concert [*samā‘*], and happiness pervaded their feelings.

The Shaikh then left the doorway, and stepped inside the convent [*zāwiya*]. He girded his waist, and took his staff in hand. Then he went out of the mosque, and the people followed him. He kept on walking, until he reached a graveyard, known as the portico [*rawḡ*] of Banī Faḍl, which is a small village near Bārīstaḡ. He halted beside one of the graves there, and turned to face the direction of prayer [*ṣalāt*]. [After performing the ritual prayer] he uncovered his head, and began to offer a supplication. The people also uncovered their heads, and said ‘*Āmīn*’ to his supplication [*du‘ā’*]. Then he covered his head again, and started back toward Bārīstaḡ, accompanied by all the people.

When the Shaikh had entered the mosque, and seated himself in his convent [*zāwiya*], they asked him why he had gone out [to the graveyard], so he explained: "While I was in the spiritual concert [*samā'*], along came a man, whom I knew to have died, from the village of Banī Faḍl. He entered the mosque, wearing nothing but a loincloth and a sleeveless vest, so I said to myself: 'This is so-and-so, the dead man. The paupers will catch sight of him, and interrupt their spiritual concert [*samā'*].' When I saw that nothing had changed, as far as you were concerned, I realized that you had not noticed him.

"He stood in front of me, and said: 'Just yesterday, O Shaikh, they buried beside us a Kurdish man, named Dāwūd. From the moment he was buried, we have not been well. We have had no rest, because of the torment that descended upon him. You must either insist that they move him away from us, or beseech Allāh (Exalted is He) to remove the torment from him.' This left me with no alternative, so I set off and walked to the graveyard. I pleaded with Allāh (Exalted is He) on his behalf, and I hope that Allāh has accepted my intercession."

It was Shaikh Ismā'il at-Tūnisī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: "Together with a party of fellow Tunisians, I set out to visit Shaikh 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him). Once we had reached our destination, and saluted the Shaikh with the greeting of peace, we sat down and started to discuss the charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] of the saints [*awliyā'*], and their degrees of attainment. The Shaikh said: 'Any Shaikh, who is not aware of every single move his pupil makes in the course of the night, is not a real Shaikh. Whether his pupil is at the Eastern end of the earth, or at the Western end, this still applies.'

"On hearing this, I said to myself: 'This is a difficult matter. It means that, when I am having sexual intercourse with my wife, my Shaikh is watching me!' For one whole month, after I had returned to my home in Tunisia, I strictly avoided contact with my wife. Shaikh 'Adī knew what I was up to, so he gave these instructions to a visiting group of spiritual paupers [*fuqarā'*]: 'When you are heading back toward your homes, one of you must go by way of Tunisia, and tell Ismā'il to come here to me.'

“They duly conveyed the Shaikh’s message, so I got myself ready at once, and set out to revisit him.

“As soon as I had arrived, and saluted him with the greeting of peace, the Shaikh rebuked me and scolded me severely. ‘O Ismā‘il,’ he said, ‘which is dearer to the Shaikh? Would he rather see his pupil engaged in something lawful [*ḥalāl*], or in something unlawful [*ḥarām*]? You must not behave like that again!’ I accepted his command, by saying: ‘To hear is to obey!’ Then I set out on my journey home.”

Shaikh ‘Umar al-Qubaiṣī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) has told us: “One day, when I was sitting in the presence of Shaikh ‘Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), his company included a group of peasant farmers. One of them said to his companion: ‘O so-and-so, if [the interrogating angels] Munkar and Nakīr (peace be upon them) descended upon you, what would you say to them?’ His companion replied: ‘I would tell them: “I am the servant of Shaikh ‘Adī.”’ The Shaikh was pleased to hear this, and he said: ‘So-and-so has spoken truly!’”

It was Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Rishā (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said: “I was in the presence of Shaikh ‘Adī, when he set out to bring the wife of his nephew—the son of his brother, Abu ‘l-Barakāt—from a place on the edge of the desert, and I went along to keep him company. We passed through terrain abounding in thorns, so I said to myself: ‘Some people travel this way as riders, and some as pedestrians, wearing shoes on their feet to protect them from the thorns, but Shaikh ‘Adī is walking barefoot!’ That affected me greatly, to such an extent that I started weeping for his sake. Then Allāh (Exalted is He) removed a veil from my eyes, and I saw the Shaikh on a wheel of light, raised to the height of seven cubits above the ground. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, on his account!”

Shaikh ‘Umar al-Qubaiṣī also said: “I was in the presence of Shaikh ‘Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), along with Shaikh ‘Alī al-Mutawakkil and Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Rishā. Shaikh Muḥammad was sitting to the right of Shaikh ‘Adī, in the place of Shaikh ‘Alī al-Mutawakkil, and that was making Shaikh ‘Alī annoyed. They sat

there for a while, and neither of them spoke, but Shaikh 'Adī was well aware of the situation. Then Shaikh 'Alī said to Shaikh 'Adī: 'O my master, will you permit me to ask my brother, Shaikh Muḥammad, a question?'

"He was granted permission, so he said: 'O Shaikh Muḥammad, where were you last night? Were you in the nether regions?' 'Yes, I was,' came the reply, so he went on to ask: 'How many men were present there, and from which ethnic groups?' Shaikh Muḥammad told him: 'Of those who have adopted the Arab culture, there were seventeen thousand men. Of the Kurds, twenty-five thousand men. Of the Turkomans, seven men. Of the Hindus, three men. Of the Gypsies [*Nawariyya*], who are also Indians, three men.' To Shaikh 'Adī's delight, Shaikh 'Alī said to Shaikh Muḥammad: 'You have told the truth.'

"Some time later, in a private session with his special companions, Shaikh 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) became relaxed and outspoken with them. 'How long can you patiently endure the lack of food and drink?' he said to Shaikh 'Alī, who replied: 'For a year I eat, but do not drink, for a year I drink, but do not eat, and for a year I neither eat nor drink.' Shaikh 'Adī said to him: 'You are nothing if not strong!' Then he put the same question to Shaikh Muḥammad, who said: 'O my master, I am inferior to my brother, Shaikh 'Alī. For nine months I eat, but do not drink, for nine months I drink, but do not eat, and for nine months I neither eat nor drink.'

Shaikh 'Umar al-Qubaiṣī continued: "Then Shaikh 'Adī turned to me and said: 'O 'Umar, how about you?' I replied: 'O my master, for six months I eat, but do not drink, for six months I drink, but do not eat, and for six months I neither eat nor drink.' Shaikh 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then exclaimed: 'Praise be to Allāh, who has included the likes of you three among my companions!'

"Up stood Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Rishā, who had always been particularly outspoken with Shaikh 'Adī. He uncovered his head, then said to him: 'O my master, I am asking you, in deference to the place of Allāh in your heart, and in deference to Shaikh 'Uqail and Shaikh Maslama, why you have not yet told us the nature of your own condition, in relation to Allāh (Exalted is He).' Shaikh 'Adī said to

him: ‘Sit down, O Kurd! You are nothing but an inquisitive chatterbox [*fudūlī*].’ Then he went on to say: ‘I shall tell you, but I require of you a solemn oath, to the effect that you will not inform anyone about it, until after my death.’

“Shaikh ‘Adī made us swear to that, then he said: ‘O Ibn Rishā, this is a man who is nourished by Allāh (Exalted is He), a man who receives his food from the Lord of Truth, who receives his drink from the Lord of Truth, who is reared by the Lord of Truth, and whom He fondles as a mother fondles her son, when that son is her only child.’

“Shaikh ‘Adī then uttered these poetic verses:

We drank above the slender flowers of springtime,  
and the cupbearer treated us generously, without affectation.

Once we had quaffed our drink, and its influx flowed  
to the place of inner secrets, I said to it: “Stop there!”

For I feared that its rays might shine upon me,  
and so reveal my hidden secret to my boon companions.”

Shaikh ‘Umar also said: “One day, Shaikh ‘Adī gave me a description of the rooster of the Heavenly Throne [*dīk al-‘Arsh*], which announces the times of ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] beneath the Throne. ‘O my master, I said to him: ‘Let me hear the sound of its voice!’ He waited until the time of the noon prayer [*ẓuhr*] came around, then he said: ‘Come right up close beside me, and put your ear next to my ear.’ I did as I was told, and I heard the cry of the rooster. This caused me to faint for a while, but then I regained consciousness.”

According to Shaikh ‘Umar, it was Shaikh ‘Adī who uttered these poetic verses:

If you wish for the nearness of the Everlasting,  
a dominion that endures, and the glory of eternity,

do not break your fast on something dubious,  
and do not sleep at night with those who go to sleep.

It was Shaikh Taqī ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Wā‘iz [the Preacher] al-Bannānī (may Allāh pardon him) who said: “As for the occasion of Shaikh ‘Adī’s birth, this is how it came about:

“His father, Musāfir ibn Ismā‘īl had gone off into the forest [*ghāba*], and there he had stayed for forty years. Then, in a dream,

he saw a mysterious speaker saying to him: 'O Musāfir, you must now go out from here, and cohabit with your wife. A saint [*walī*] of Allāh (Exalted is He) will come to you, and great will be his fame, both in the East and in the West.'

"Musāfir left the forest, and came to his wife. [When he approached her sexually] she said: 'I will not do it, unless you first climb to the top of this minaret, and issue the proclamation: "O people of this town, I am Musāfir! I had already died [to this world], but I have been commanded to mount my mare [*faras*]. If anyone mounts his mare, a saint [*walī*] will come to him!" [He agreed to make this announcement] and, because of it, three hundred and thirteen saints were born.

"When Shaikh 'Adī's mother was pregnant with him, Shaikh Maslama and Shaikh 'Uqail 'Alī passed by her, while she was drawing water from a well. Shaikh Maslama said to Shaikh 'Uqail: 'Do you see what I see?' 'And what is that?' asked 'Uqail. 'A ray of light, beaming up into the sky from this woman's womb!' replied Maslama. 'Uqail then said: 'This is our son, 'Adī. Come, let us salute him with the greeting of peace!' So they went toward him and said: 'Peace be upon you [*as-salāmu 'alaik*], O 'Adī. Peace be upon you, O saint of Allāh!' Then they left to pursue their wandering travels, which kept them away for the next seven years.

"When they finally came back, they saw him playing a ball game with other young boys. His playmates kept calling him by a nickname, and he kept saying: 'I am 'Adī ibn Musāfir!' Once they had caught his attention, the Shaikhs saluted him with the greeting of peace, one time only. He returned their greeting three times, however, so they asked him: 'Why did you return our greeting three times?' To this he replied: 'Because you had already saluted me twice, when I was still in my mother's womb. But for my sense of modesty, with respect to Mary's son Jesus [*'Īsa 'bnu Maryam*] (peace be upon him), I would have returned your greeting twice from inside my mother's womb.'

"One night, when he had attained to man's estate, he saw a mysterious speaker saying to him: 'O 'Adī, you must now go to Lālīsh, for that is your place of residence, and Allāh will revive dead hearts at your hands.'

Shaikh Taqī ad-Dīn also said: “Abu ’l-Barakāt has told us: ‘One day, thirty spiritual paupers [*fuqarā*] entered the presence of my paternal uncle, Shaikh ‘Adī. Ten of them said: “O our master, speak to us about something concerning Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*].” When he spoke to them on that subject, they melted away, and all that was left in their place was a puddle of water. Then a second set of ten came forward, and said to him: “O our master, speak to us about something concerning the reality of love [*maḥabba*].” When he spoke to them on that subject, all ten of them died. Then the remaining ten came forward, and said: “O our master, speak to us about something concerning the reality of spiritual poverty [*faqr*].” When he spoke to them on that subject, they stripped themselves of whatever clothes they happened to be wearing, and went out, stark naked, into the desert.

“On another day, a group of visitors came to him and said: “We would like you to show us an example of the charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] of the people [of the Spiritual Path].” In response to this request, Shaikh ‘Adī said: “O my brothers, we are simple paupers!” “That is beside the point,” they said, so he told them: “Allāh has certain men, who would say to those trees: ‘Prostrate yourselves before Allāh (Exalted is He),’ and those trees would bow down in prostration, each and every one of them. That is why, even now, not a single tree can grow here, unless it is tilted toward the convent [*zāwiya*].” May Allāh be well pleased with him!” (Here ends this abridged quotation.)

☞ Excerpts concerning Shaikh ‘Adī, from the works of several historians. ☞

In his *Ta’rīkh* [History], ‘Imād ad-Dīn ibn Kathīr informs us:

“As for Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir ibn Ismā’il ibn Mūsā ibn Marwān ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Marwān al-Hakkārī, he is the Shaikh of the Ṣūfī order [*tā’ifa*] known as the ‘Adawiyya. His native place was a village called Bait Fār, in the Biqā’ valley, to the west of Damascus. From there he traveled to Baghdād, where he established connections with Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, Shaikh Ḥammād ad-Dabbās, Shaikh ‘Uqail al-Manbajī, Abu ’l-Wafā al-Ḥalwānī, Abu ’n-Najīb as-Suhrawardī,

and others besides. Then he went into isolation on Mount Hakkār, and a convent [*zāwiya*] was built for him there. The people in those regions are committed to him with a firm and profound belief, to the point where some of them cross the line into extravagant and reprehensible excess.”

In the *Ta'rikh* [History] of al-Ḥāfiẓ adh-Dhahabī, the author states: “He has also been mentioned by al-Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Qādir, who calls him ‘Adī the Syrian [*ash-Shāmī*].’ He spent many years as a wanderer, befriended the Shaikhs, and applied himself with intense dedication to all kinds of spiritual struggle [*mujāhadāt*]. Then he settled on one of the mountains of Mosul [*al-Mawṣil*], in a place where no one was friendly toward him. Then Allāh used him as His agent, in order to make those places more civilized. He cultivated them with his blessed influence, until no one felt afraid there any longer, since highway robberies had become a thing of the past. A gang of villainous Kurds became restrained, due to that blessed influence of his.

“Allāh (Exalted is He) granted him long life, so that very many people derived great benefit from him, and his fame spread far and wide. Shaikh 'Adī was a lofty example of goodness, a sincere counselor, and a meticulous observer of his duty to Allāh (Exalted is He). In finding fault with him, no critic could claim to speak on Allāh's behalf. He lived for nearly eighty years, and we have no information to suggest that he ever did any buying and selling, or that he ever became involved in worldly affairs.

“He had a handful of seeds, which he planted on his arrival at the mountain, and he sustained himself by harvesting the produce. He also grew cotton, from which he made his own clothes. He never consumed anything from anyone's property, and he never entered anyone's home. He would work for many days without a break, so that certain people came to believe that he never ate anything at all. When he heard about that, he took something and ate it in the presence of the people concerned.” (Here ends the quotation.)

In the *Ta'rikh* [History] of Ibn Khallikān, we find the following entry:

“The righteous Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir, whose surname 'al-Hakkārī' indicates his place of residence, was a pious ascetic, devoted to

worshipful service. He is widely known, for his fame has spread through all the towns and regions. Many people have followed him, and their belief in him has gone beyond the limit. They have come to regard him as their store of treasure in the Hereafter. The people of all those districts have an enormous affection for him, the like of which is quite unheard-of.

“He was born in a village called Bait Fār, in one of the districts of Baalbek [*Ba‘labakk*]. The house in which he was born is visited to this day. He died in the year [A.H.] 557 (some say 555), and his tomb is revered by his followers, as one of their numerous sites of pious visitation.” (Here ends the quotation.)

In his work entitled “History To Rely On for Accounts of the Bygone” [*at-Ta‘rikh al-mu‘tabar fī anḡā’ man ‘abar*], the Chief Justice [*Qāḡi ‘l-Quḡāt*] Mujīr ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Raḡmān al-Umarī al-Maqḡisī al-‘Ulaīmī al-Ḥanbalī has informed us:

“As for that righteous servant [of the Lord], Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Mūsā ibn Marwān al-Umawī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Marwān ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Walīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam ibn Abī Lu‘aṣ ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ibn Rabī‘a ibn ‘Abd ash-Shams ibn Zahra ibn ‘Abd al-Manāf (may Allāh be well pleased with him, and with all of them), his surname ‘al-Hakkārī’ indicates his place of residence. He is famous as the founding Shaikh of the Ṣūfī order [*ṭā’ifa*] known as the ‘Adawiyya. His reputation has spread to the farthest horizons, and many people have become his followers.

“He was born in a village called Bait Fār, in one of the districts of Baalbek [*Ba‘labakk*], and the house in which he was born is visited to this day. He died in the year [A.H.] 557 (some say 555), and he was buried in his convent [*ṣāwīya*]. He lived to the age of ninety.” (Here ends the quotation.) May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



## 9. Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī (d. A.H. 564)

Of all the Shaikhs of ‘Irāq, that exemplary guide, Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī<sup>180</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), was one of the finest of those endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]. He was the Cardinal Pole [*Qutb*] of the time, and one of the four empowered to heal the blind-from-birth and the leper, and to restore the dead to life, by the leave of Allāh (Glory be to Him, and Exalted is He).<sup>181</sup>

Shaikh ‘Alī held the two articles of clothing—a gown and a cotton skullcap—with which Abū Bakr, the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him), had invested Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā in a dream, and which the latter had found himself actually wearing, as soon as he woke up.<sup>182</sup> Shaikh ash-Shunbukī received them from Shaikh Ibn Huwārā, then Shaikh Abu ‘l-Wafā’ received them from ash-Shunbukī, then Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī received them from Abu ‘l-Wafā’. Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs was the next to receive them, but then they somehow disappeared.

Shaikh ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) is the one to whom came the address: “O My king, administer My kingdom freely [*yā malikī taṣarraf fī mulkī*]!”

It is a matter of common knowledge, that he spent eighty years without access to a private apartment or retreat. During all that time, he used to sleep among the spiritual paupers [*fuqarā’*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them).

Allāh (Exalted is He) presented him in high profile to His creatures, and granted him tremendous prestige in their sight,

<sup>180</sup> At this point in the original text, the author spells out <H-ī-t-ī> letter by letter, using the appropriate Arabic terminology, in order to ensure the correct pronunciation: *bi-kasr al-hā’ wa sukūn al-yāy al-muthannāh min taḥt wa kasr at-tā’ al-muthannāh min fawq*.

<sup>181</sup> **Author’s note:** [Invoking these four] a man impaired by deafness once said: “O Allāh, in their honor, restore my hearing!”—and his deafness went away.

<sup>182</sup> See p. 344 above.

instilling respect for him in their breasts, and love for him in their hearts. Allāh (Exalted is He) caused him to speak about the hidden mysteries, endowed him with supernatural abilities, and established him as a model and an exemplary guide.

Our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), would often extol his special merit. He loved him dearly, respected him greatly, and spoke of him in glowing terms. He once said: “Whenever one of the saints [*awliyā’*] comes to Baghdād, from the realm of the Unseen or the visible, that visitor enjoys our hospitality, while we are enjoying the hospitality of Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī.”

It was Shaikh ‘Alī al-Khabbāz who said: “Of all the Shaikhs who were contemporaries of Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), we know of none more diligent than Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī, in frequent attention and loyal service to our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. May Allāh be well pleased with them both!

“Whenever Shaikh ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) intended to visit Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he and his companions would bathe themselves in the River Tigris. Then he would say to them: ‘Purify your hearts, and guard your thoughts and feelings [*khawāṭir*], for we are about to enter the presence of the Sulṭān!’ When he reached the schoolhouse, he would disguise himself, and stand waiting at the door. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir would invite him in, crying: ‘Come to me, O my brother!’ As soon as he had entered, the Shaikh would seat him at his side. Then, since his guest would be trembling, he would say to him: ‘How can you be afraid, when you are the police chief [*shihna*] of ‘Irāq?’

“To this Shaikh ‘Alī would reply: ‘O my master, you are the Sulṭān. Assure me that I have nothing to fear from you! Once my fear of you is assuaged, I shall feel quite safe and secure!’ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir would tell him: ‘You have nothing to fear!’

“Leadership in this [spiritual] business devolved upon Shaikh ‘Alī, making him responsible for the training of the genuine seekers [*murīdīn ṣādiqīn*] and the resolution of problems encountered in

their spiritual states. More than a few distinguished figures received their education in his fellowship, such as Abū Muḥammad 'Alī ibn Idrīs al-Ya'qūbī, to name only one example. His students included a considerable number of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states. A vast community became affiliated to him. The scholars and the Shaikhs were unanimous in declaring him worthy of honor and respect. His own Shaikh, Shaikh Tāj al-Ārifin (may Allāh be well pleased with him), would frequently extol his special merit, while according him precedence over others, and bestowing his gracious favor upon him.

"He had an exquisite way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the Realities [*Ḥaqā'iq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them). Here is a typical example:

"The Sacred Law [*Sharī'a*] provides the incentive for dutiful endeavor [*taḥlīf*], while Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*] is the source of direct enlightenment [*ta'rīf*]. The Sacred Law is thus supported by Reality, and Reality is supported by the Sacred Law. The Sacred Law gives rise to the existence of deeds [*wujūd al-af'al*], performed for the sake of Allāh (Exalted is He), while Reality gives rise to the witnessing of spiritual states [*shuhūd al-aḥwāl*], experienced because of Allāh (Exalted is He).'

"Here is a specimen of his poetry:

If I set out to seek Him, my journey will never end,  
or, if I come into His presence, I shall be present as an absentee.

I shall not see Him, therefore, though He will not vanish from my gaze,  
nor in my mind, and I shall never meet Him in my lifetime.

Would that I were absent from my body at the sight of Him,  
and from my heart, and from my ears, and from my eyes!

"A mysterious figure once came and whispered something to Shaikh 'Alī, while the Chief Minister of the Imperial Council [*Ṣāhib ad-Dīwān*] was sitting in front of him. The Shaikh stood up at once, and girded his waist, so the Chief Minister of the Imperial Council said to him: 'What is this, O my master?' The Shaikh replied: 'When a command comes to you from the Caliph [*Khalīfa*], how do you react?' 'O my master,' he said, 'I do exactly what you have just done. I am always ready to be of service, by doing whatever I am commanded to do.'

“‘Well,’ said the Shaikh, ‘The command of my master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, has just been conveyed to me by al-Khiḍr<sup>183</sup> (peace be upon him). He wants me to supply him with a couple of baking ovens for his pigeons. He is the Caliph of the saints [*awliyā’*] and the Shaikhs at this time, and the Sulṭān of the realm of existence in this generation.’

“On one occasion, when Shaikh ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) paid a visit to our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he arrived to find him asleep. Instead of waking him directly, he said three times: ‘By Allāh, I bear witness, in the presence of Allāh, that there is no one like him among the Disciples [*Ḥawāriyyīn*]!’ As soon as the Shaikh woke up, he said: ‘I am a Muḥammadan [*Muḥammadī*], whereas the Disciples are Christians [*‘Īsawiyyūn*]!’

“Shaikh ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: ‘If a black ant were to crawl, one dark night, over a black rock on Mount Qāf,<sup>184</sup> and my Lord did not let me know about it immediately, and did not cause me to observe it directly, my gall bladder would burst!’”

### ☞ Accounts of the charismatic exploits of Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥiti. ☞

We owe these next reports to the two Shaikhs, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Ḥawrānī and Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar ibn Muzāḥim ad-Danīṣawī, who said:

“Shaikh ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once rode on a journey that took him to a settlement in the districts of Nahr al-Malik [the King’s River]. He lodged with one of the local inhabitants, and the man received him with warm hospitality. The Shaikh pointed to some chickens in front of him, and said: ‘Slaughter this chicken, and this one....’ The man did as he asked, and, to his astonishment, a hundred gold pieces fell out of their bellies.

“The man’s sister had a pendant of gold, which had somehow become detached. She did not know where she had lost it, and the chickens had pecked the gold pieces from the ground. Her relatives thought that something nasty had happened to her, and they planned

<sup>183</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

<sup>184</sup> See note 47 on p. 81 above.

to kill her that night, so the Shaikh said: 'Allāh showed me the proof of your sister's innocence. He made me aware of what was on your minds, and what was in the bellies of these chickens. I asked my Lord (Blessed and Exalted is He) for permission to disclose the truth of this matter to you, and to save you from disaster, and He granted His permission.' May Allāh be well pleased with him!

"On another occasion, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) attended a spiritual concert [*samā'*] in the village of Razirān. While the Shaikhs were experiencing the ecstasy of the spiritual concert, the local jurists [*fuqahā'*] and Qur'ān-reciters [*qurrā'*] sat watching them, while nursing reproachful criticism of them inside themselves. Shaikh 'Alī came over to these hostile spectators, and circled around them. Each time he approached a man, and looked at him, all knowledge of the Qur'ān and religious science disappeared from that person's memory.

"The Shaikh treated every last one of them in this fashion, and they remained like that for a month. Then they all came to him, kissed his feet, and begged for forgiveness, so he ordered the spreading of a table-mat. They ate, and he ate with them. He fed a morsel to each one of them, and each of them rediscovered the knowledge he had lost.

"The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) traveled to all the villages of Nahr al-Malik. He found that the inhabitants of two villages had unsheathed their swords, and were preparing for battle. This was due to the fact that a murdered body had been thrown down between them, and each of the two parties suspected the other of the killing. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) came and stood over the victim, took hold of his forelock, and said: 'Who killed you, O servant of Allāh?' The man sat up straight, and said: 'It was so-and-so, the son of so-and-so, who killed me.' Then he went back to being a lifeless corpse."

Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Jawsaqī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) has informed us: "When I caught sight of the Shaikh, one day, I supposed that he was unaware of my presence. He was sitting under a date palm in a plowed field, and I noticed that the palm tree was laden with clusters of fruit. It tilted over, until it was very close to him, so he started plucking the fruit and eating it. This was at a time when there was no fruit on any other date palm in 'Irāq. Then

he moved away, so I went and sat in the place he had vacated. I found some fruit there, so I ate it, and its taste resembled the flavor of musk."

It was Shaikh Abū Muḥammad Mas'ūd al-Ḥārithī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: "I once found our own Shaikh, Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), in the presence of a woman who worked as his servant. Her personal name was Raiḥāna, and she was nicknamed Sitt al-Bahā' [Lady of Beauty]. May Allāh be well pleased with them both! She had contracted the sickness from which she was soon to die, so she said to the Shaikh: 'O my master, I have a keen appetite for ripe dates!' There were no ripe dates in the village of Razīrān at that time, and those we had harvested, in another village, were in the keeping of a righteous individual called 'Abd as-Salām.

"The Shaikh turned his face in the direction of our crop, and said: 'O 'Abd as-Salām, bring some of your ripe dates to Raiḥāna!' Allāh made his voice audible to 'Abd as-Salām, who took some of the ripe dates, and traveled to reach the Shaikh. On his arrival, he set the ripe dates in front of Raiḥāna, and she ate her fill. 'Abd as-Salām said to her: 'O my mistress, in front of you there is something even better.' 'O 'Abd as-Salām,' said she, 'I am the maidservant of Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī, yet something of this world and the Hereafter escapes me. Go now, and may you become a Christian!' Then she died, and passed on to the mercy of Allāh (Exalted is He).

"'Abd as-Salām then set out for Baghdād. Somewhere along the way, he happened to see some Christian women, and he fell in love with one of them. He asked her to marry him, but she was unwilling to accept his proposal, unless he converted to Christianity, so he complied. After their marriage, he stayed with her in her village, and she bore him several children. Then he contracted a very serious illness. Shaikh 'Alī was told of his condition, so he said: 'O my Lord, I was angry over the dissatisfaction of Raiḥāna, but now I am content. I beg You to bring him to me, for I do not want him to be resurrected in the company of the Christians [Naṣārā].'

"Then he said to Shaikh 'Umar al-Bazzāz: 'Go to the village called such-and-such, and enter the presence of 'Abd as-Salām. Pour a jar of water over him, and bring him here to me.' Shaikh 'Umar went to that village, where he found him in a serious state of sickness. He

poured the water over 'Abd as-Salām, who promptly stood up and declared himself a Muslim. His wife also embraced Islām, and so did his children, as well as all the members of their household. He recovered from his sickness, and they all came to visit the Shaikh. Through the blessed grace of Shaikh 'Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), all good things were restored to 'Abd as-Salām."

Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hītī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) lived in the village of Razīrān, in the province of Nahr al-Malik, until he died there in the year [A.H.] 564. At the time of his death, he was more than one hundred and twenty years of age. He was buried in Razīrān, and his tomb is a prominent site of visitation.

He was brilliant and splendid, graceful and handsome. He dressed in the style of the people of the Sawād [the rural area of 'Irāq]. He combined the noblest traits of character, the most excellent attributes of virtue, and the most glorious of charismatic talents [*manāqib*]. Of all the people of his time, was one of the most generous, the most intelligent, and the most altruistic. His exploits are famous, and his companions have followed in his footsteps on this path. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!



10.  
Shaikh Abū Ya‘azz al-Maghribī  
(d. ca. A.H. 570)<sup>185</sup>

Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ya‘azz al-Maghribī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was one of the outstanding Shaikhs of the West [Maghrib], and one of their most prominent saints [awliyā’]. He was endowed with supernatural charismatic talents [karāmāt khāriqa], manifest powers of dispensation [taṣrīf], splendid spiritual stations, lofty attributes of character, and brilliant spiritual states. He was one of the mainstays [awtād] of the West, where he was one of the most glorious of those who know by direct experience [‘ārīfīn], and one of the greatest of the ascetics [zuhhād] and those who specialize in Reality [muḥaqqiqīn]. He was one of the pillars of this Spiritual Path [Ṭarīqa], and his standing in this [spiritual] business was firmly established. He attracted visitors from all the regions of the East and the West. He practiced constant vigilance, severe self-criticism, and vigorous exertion in the spiritual struggle [mujāhada].

Of the senior Shaikhs of the West, more than a few received their training in his fellowship, and his teaching was propagated by countless followers. The people of the West would seek nourishment from him, and they would always receive the nourishment they sought. They would have recourse to him in their most difficult situations, and their problems would always be resolved.

He had an exalted way of speaking about the esoteric sciences [ma‘ārīf], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

•Spiritual states [aḥwāl] are dominant [mālīka] in relation to people in the initial stages of development [ahl al-bidāyāt], for those states control them. They are subordinate [mamlūka] to people in the final stages [ahl an-nihāyāt], for they control those states.

<sup>185</sup> According to J. S. Trimingham (*op. cit.*, p. 46) Shaikh Abū Ya‘azz died in 1176 C.E. (Trimingham describes him as “a crude non-Arabic-speaking Berber.”)

- Any “real experience” that does not wipe out every personal trace and vestige of the servant [of the Lord] is not a real experience [*ḥaqīqa*].

- If someone seeks the Truth [*Ḥaqq*] from the direction of grace [*fadl*], he will attain thereto.

- He who does not belong to anyone, does not exist because of anyone.

- The most valuable speech is that which is indicative of direct witnessing [*mushāhada*].

At the outset of his career, Shaikh Abū Yaʿazz (may Allāh be well pleased with him) spent fifteen years in the wilderness, eating nothing but seeds from the mallow plant. The lions used to snuggle up beside him, and the birds would alight upon him. When the lions took to prowling, attacking the caravans and making the roads unsafe for travelers, he would go and grab them by their tails, and they would meekly submit to his command. “O dogs of Allāh,” he would say to them, “get away from here, and do not come back!” They would promptly depart, and that would be the last time they were seen in that particular place.

It was Shaikh Muḥammad al-Ifriqī [the African] who said: “The woodcutters came and complained to him about the large number of lions in the forest, from which they gathered logs, so he said to his servant: ‘Go to the edge of the forest, and shout at the top of your voice: “Hear this, all you lions! Shaikh Abū Yaʿazz is ordering you to clear away from this forest.”’ The servant went and did as the Shaikh had told him, and the lions came trooping out, carrying their cubs, until the forest was empty. Not a single lion has ever been seen in it since then.

Shaikh Abū Madyan (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has told us: “It was in the West, during a period of drought, that I went to visit Shaikh Abū Yaʿazz. I found him sitting in the desert, surrounded by many wild beasts, including some lions. They were all mingled together, doing no harm to one another. He also had many birds perched on his head. One of the wild animals would approach him and make a noise, as if complaining to him, so he would tell it: ‘Your sustenance, consisting of such-and-such, can be found in the place

called such-and-such.’ The beast would then leave his presence, and each of the others would come to him in turn.

“He said to me: ‘The wild beasts and the birds all gathered here, complaining to me about the severe shortage of food and water. They said that they would not prefer to inhabit any other country, aside from the lands of the West, because they love having me as their neighbor, and because Allāh has shown me when and where they can find their food supplies!’”

One of Shaikh Abū Madyan’s companions came to his [master’s] Shaikh, Shaikh Abū Ya‘azz, during a time of drought, and said to him: ‘I own a plot of land, from which my family and I obtain our sustenance, but it is now completely barren.’ The Shaikh went with him to his plot of land, and walked all over it. Rain then fell on that man’s land, targeting it specifically, until it was thoroughly irrigated. The rain did not go an inch beyond it, and no other plot of land in the West could be cultivated.

Shaikh Abū Ya‘azz (may Allāh be well pleased with him) eventually settled in A‘it, a borough in one of the districts of Fez [*Fās*], and he lived there till he died, at a very advanced age. His tomb is a prominent site in that locality, and it is frequently visited. The people of Morocco refer to him as Dad, meaning “The Great Father” [in the Berber language]. They have given him that title because of the great esteem in which they hold him. May Allāh be well pleased with him!



## 11. Shaikh Maslama as-Sarūjī (d. A.H. 466)

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Abū Ni‘ma Maslama ibn Ni‘ma as-Sarūjī, he was the Shaikh of Shaikhs, the chieftain of the saints [*sayyid al-awliyā’*], the leader of the chosen [*ra’īs al-aṣfiyā’*], and the captain of the truly devout [*ṣa‘īm al-atqiyā’*]. His standing was firmly based, and his aspirations lofty. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], magnificent spiritual states, supernatural deeds [*aḥ‘āl khāriqa*], and the breathing of truthful breaths. He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) presents in high profile to the existing universe [*wujūd*], to whom He gives free rein in the realm of being [*kawn*], and for whom He instills approval and complete respect in the breasts of His creatures.

Shaikh Maslama was one of the people of knowledge and devoutness, munificence and generosity. He treated guests with hospitality, strangers with dignity, paupers with sympathy, the weak with civility, and the wretched with mercy.

Leadership of this [spiritual] business devolved upon him in his day and age, with regard to knowledge and practice, spiritual state and spiritual station. Many of the most outstanding Shaikhs received their education from him, including Shaikh ‘Uqail al-Manjabī (of whom we shall have more to say [in the next section]), among other eminent figures. His teaching was propagated by a vast number of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, and he attracted a host of pupils from among those whose footing is firmly established in this business. The scholars and Shaikhs were unanimous in declaring him worthy of reverence and honor, and visiting him was one of their highest priorities.

Shaikh Maslama is reported as having said: “I incubated forty eggs, and none of them proved to be fertile, apart from this Shaikh

‘Uqail al-Manjabī.” He was alluding to the fact that Shaikh ‘Uqail (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had forty pupils, including Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir, Shaikh Mūsā az-Zuwālī, Shaikh Raslān ad-Dimashqī, and Shaikh Shubaib ash-Shaṭṭī al-Furātī. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

The author of *Kitāb al-Arwāḥ* [The Book of Spirits] has informed us of the following report: “During the lifetime of Shaikh Maslama as-Sarūjī, the town of Sarūj was attacked by the infidels [*kafara*], either the Franks [*Firanj*] or the Armenians [*Arman*]. They killed and they took prisoners. When the Shaikh’s companions heard that his convent [*zāwiya*] was about to be attacked, they said: ‘O our master, the enemy has come.’ He said: ‘Be patient!’ They kept repeating the warning, until they said: ‘The distance between them and us is no more than a stone’s throw!’

“Only then did he step outside. With a wave of his noble hand, he ordered the assailants to retreat. Their horses promptly carried them away, with such compelling force that they could not reverse their stampede, however hard they tried. Fatal casualties were many indeed, among both the cavalymen and their horses. Their formations were scattered, and they reached the town walls in terrible shape. Then they dismounted, and acted in keeping with chivalrous good manners, turning their faces toward the convent [*zāwiya*]. They sent envoys to the Shaikh, apologizing and begging his pardon, so he said to their messengers: ‘Tell them: “He will send you the answer you deserve for what you have done, tomorrow morning, if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills.”’

“The infidels were thus left wondering what the answer might be. It came to them early the next morning, when the army of the Muslims arrived on the scene, rooted them out, and utterly annihilated them.” (Here ends the quotation.)

According to another report: “The forsaken enemy [*al-‘aduww al-makhdhūl*]<sup>186</sup> had once captured Shaikh Maslama’s son, Ni‘ma,

<sup>186</sup> The epithet *makhdhūl* [forsaken], applied to the infidel foe, is evocative of the Qur’ānic verse:

Do not set up with Allāh any other god,  
*lā taj‘al ma‘a ‘llāhi ilāhan ākhara*  
 lest you sit down reproved, forsaken.  
*fa-taq‘uda madhmūman makhdhūlā.* (17:22)

who remained with them for some time. When the night of the Festival [*‘Īd*] came around, his mother burst into tears. The Shaikh asked her what was the matter, and she replied: ‘Do I need to explain what is the matter with me, when my son is in captivity?’

“‘What do you want?’ he asked.

“‘The Shaikh’s alms-gift [*ṣadaqa*],’ she replied.

“‘We shall bring him home in the morning,’ said he, ‘if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills.’

“Then, early in the morning, the Shaikh said [to his companions]: ‘Go to Tel Ḥarmal, and bring him home!’ They went there at once, and found the young man together with a lion. When they asked him to explain the presence of the beast, he said: ‘This lion came and carried me here on its back, from the house of the man who held me captive.’ As soon as the lion saw them, it returned to the place from whence it had come, strolling at an easy pace.”

(Tel Ḥarmal is said to be a village to the east of Shaikh Maslama’s own village, the two being separated by an hour’s journey.)

According to yet another report: “A certain person had gone to perform the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*], along with a group of friends. When the night of the Festival of Sacrifice [*‘Īd al-Aḍḥā*] came around, his mother said: ‘We have baked some loaves and cakes, and my heart is longing to share them with my son.’ Shaikh Maslama said to her: ‘Fetch me his portion. I shall wrap it up for him.’ She brought it to him, and the Shaikh concealed it in a wrapper.

“When the Pilgrim came home, he had that wrapper with him, so his mother asked him about it. He and his companions said: ‘We found this wrapper on the night of the Festival [*‘Īd*], with loaves and cakes inside it, as fresh as if they had just been taken from the oven.’ May Allāh be well pleased with Shaikh Maslama!”

He died (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) in the month of Rajab, in the year [A.H.] 466. He died in his own village, which is about an hour and a half away from the town of Sarūj, toward the southeast, and there he was buried. His tomb is a prominent local site, which is often visited. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He enable us to benefit by him!

As for his surname “as-Sarūjī,” it indicates his connection with the abovementioned town of Sarūj. It does not link him to the saddler’s trade [*‘amal as-surūj*]. If it did, the spelling would be “as-Surūjī.”<sup>187</sup> Allāh knows best, of course.



<sup>187</sup> In order to clarify the spelling, pronunciation and meaning of the Shaikh’s surname, the author uses the appropriate Arabic terminology (which can only be paraphrased in English): *as-Sarūjī bi-fath as-sīn al-muhmala nisba ilā madīna Sarūj.... / alladhī ya‘malu surūj ad-dawābb yuqālu la-hu surūjī bi-ḍamm as-sīn al-muhmala.*

## 12. Shaikh ‘Uqail al-Manbijī

**T**he exemplary Shaikh ‘Uqail al-Manbijī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was the Shaikh of the Shaikhs of Syria in his day and age. More than a few of their leading figures (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) received their education in his fellowship. Their actual number was forty men, all of them endowed with remarkable spiritual states, including Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir and Shaikh Mūsā az-Zuwālī (may Allāh be well pleased with them both). He was the first to introduce the noble tattered cloak [*khirqā*] of [the Ṣūfī order known as] the ‘Umariyya into Syria, where it was received from him through investiture.

He was known as aṭ-Ṭayyār [the Flyer], because he had flown from the minaret of his village in the regions of the East. Then his people heard that he was in Manbij,<sup>188</sup> so they came and found him there, [and he thus acquired the surname “al-Manbijī”]. He was also named al-Ghawwāṣ [the Pearl Diver]. This name was conferred upon him by his own Shaikh, Shaikh Maslama (may Allāh be well pleased with him), because of what happened when he went on a visit to Jerusalem [*Bait al-Maqdis*], together with a group of the Shaikh Maslama’s companions. When they reached the River Euphrates [*al-Furāt*], each of them laid his prayer rug [*sajjāda*] on the water, sat on it, and sailed across to the other side. Shaikh ‘Uqail likewise laid his prayer rug on the water, and sat upon it. Then he dived into the water and swam across, without getting wet in the slightest. When they later returned to the presence of Shaikh Maslama, they reported this to him, so he said: “‘Uqail is one of the pearl divers [*ghawwāṣīn*].”

Shaikh ‘Uqail is one of the four Shaikhs who are able to function in their graves, with the same freedom as the living. Those four are:

<sup>188</sup> Manbij (the ancient Bambyce) is a ruined city near the River Euphrates in the Syrian province of Aleppo [*Halab*].

(1) Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, (2) Shaikh Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī,<sup>189</sup> (3) Shaikh ‘Uqail al-Manjibī, and (4) Shaikh Ḥayāt ibn Qais al-Ḥarrānī.<sup>190</sup> May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

Shaikh ‘Uqail had a sublime way of speaking about the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- This Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīq*] of ours consists of earnest endeavor, laborious toil, and strict adherence to the rule, until you are slit into shreds [*al-jidd wa ’l-kadd wa luzūm al-ḥadd ḥattā tanqadd*!] This means that the chivalrous hero [*fatā*] will either reach his desired destination, or die of sheer exhaustion.

- If someone seeks a spiritual state or station for his personal satisfaction, he is far from the methods of the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*].

- Chivalry [*futuwwa*] means noticing the virtues of the servants [of the Lord], and turning a blind eye to their vices.

- To claim for oneself a spiritual state, without being endowed with any such state, is to be a false pretender.

It was Shaikh ‘Uthmān ibn Marzūq who said: “In the early stage of his career, Shaikh ‘Uqail al-Manjibī once went and sat in a cave, together with seventeen men, pupils of Shaikh Maslama (may Allāh be well pleased with him), all of whom were endowed with remarkable spiritual states. Each of them had placed his staff at a certain spot in the cave, when some men came out of the air, and started picking up those staffs. They collected them all, until they came to the staff of Shaikh ‘Uqail, which they could not lift with their hands, whether they tried individually or all together.

“When the group returned to Shaikh Maslama, they told him what had happened, so he said: ‘Those men are the saints [*awliyā’*] of Allāh in this day and age. The owner of each of those staffs is therefore at, or beneath, the spiritual station of the saint who picked it up. That explains why they were incapable of lifting ‘Uqail’s staff, for none of them has attained to a station higher than his station.’”

<sup>189</sup> See note 39 on p. 71 above.

<sup>190</sup> See p. 479 below.

It was Shaikh Abu 'l-Majd al-Manjibī who said: "My father told me that my grandfather had told him: 'I once entered the presence of Shaikh 'Uqail, beneath the mountain outside Manjib, when several righteous men were in his company. One of them asked him: "What is the distinguishing mark of the truthful person [ṣādiq]?" The Shaikh replied: "If he were to say to this mountain: "Move!" it would surely move," and the mountain did move.

"Then came the question: "What is the distinguishing mark of someone endowed with powers of dispensation [*mutaṣarrif*]?" To this the Shaikh replied: "If he commanded the wild creatures of the land and the sea to come to him, they would do as he commanded." Before he had finished his sentence, wild animals came down to us from the mountain, filling all the space around us. As the fishermen reported, the bank of the Euphrates was fully stocked with fish at that same moment.

"The next question was: "O my master, what is the distinguishing mark of someone who is favored with blessed grace, beyond all the other people of his time?" To this the Shaikh replied: "If he kicked this rock with his foot, fountains would gush from it, then it would turn hard again." Fountains immediately gushed from a rock in front of him, then it went back to being a solid rock.

"He also said: "As he was leaving his convent [*zāwiya*] one day, at the start of a journey that would take him away from Manjib, he noticed a group of his companions and students, standing there waiting for him. His inner self said to him: "These people are standing out here for your sake!" He began to weep, then he uttered these poetic verses:

I exceeded my capacity in my love for you all,  
though I was so sure that I was treating you kindly.

The lover of the noble, even if he is not noble,  
will be ennobled by the love that he feels for them."

Shaikh 'Uqail (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in Manbij, and he made it his home for forty-nine years. He died there at a very advanced age. His tomb is a prominent local site, to which visits are still paid at the present time. I went there as a visitor myself, in my early youth. Through his blessed grace, I obtained all that is good. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!

### 13. Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Wahb ar-Rabī‘ī

As for that exemplary guide, the enlightened Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Wahb ar-Rabī‘ī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the most splendid Shaikhs of ‘Irāq. His importance was great indeed, for he was endowed with supernatural charismatic talents [*karāmāt khāriqa*], glorious spiritual stations, and positions of lofty distinction. He held the highest peak in the sphere of the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*], and the most elevated situation in the domain of the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*].

He was one of those whom Allāh presents to His creatures in high profile, for He instilled respect for him in their hearts, caused him to speak about the hidden mysteries, and gave him opportunities beyond the ordinary.

The Shaikhs, and others too, unanimously acknowledged his preeminence. Responsibility for the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] devolved upon him, in Sinjār and all the neighboring districts. Many righteous and distinguished individuals received their education from him, including Shaikh Suwaid as-Sinjārī, Shaikh Abū Bakr al-Khabbāz, and Shaikh Sa‘d aṣ-Ṣanā’ihī, to name only three of them. Of the people of the East, a countless number became affiliated to him.

It is related that, when he died, he left behind seventy-one pupils, all of them endowed with remarkable spiritual states. On the day of his death, they assembled in the garden opposite his convent [*ẓāwiya*], and each of them gathered a bunch of plants from that garden. When they breathed upon them, they blossomed with flowers of many different colors.

It was Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Wahb who said: “Allāh (Exalted is He) has granted me a treasure, sealed with His power and His strength.”

He was given the name *Rādd al-Ghā'ib* [Restorer of the Lost], because, if someone came to him, having lost his spiritual state, the Shaikh would restore it to him with added blessing.

He was one of the two men who were invested, in their dreams, with something taken from the tattered cloak [*khirqā*] of the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and who woke up to find themselves actually wearing it as a skullcap. The other was our master, Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Huwārā.<sup>191</sup>

On one occasion, Shaikh 'Alī ibn Wahb was together with Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir and Shaikh Mūsā az-Zuwālī, beside a huge rock on Mount Shukriyya, in the regions of the East. The two of them asked him: "What is the affirmation of Divine Oneness [*tawhīd*]?" Shaikh 'Alī pointed his hand toward the rock, and said: "This!" Then he exclaimed: "Allāh!"—and the rock split into two halves. The site is well known, and people perform ritual prayers [*yusallūn*] in the space between the two halves. May Allāh be well pleased with those Shaikhs!

It was 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd who said: "My father told me that my grandfather once told him: 'For forty years, I led my master, Shaikh 'Alī ibn Wahb, in the performance of the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*]. I asked him about the early stage of his career, and he said:

““I memorized the Glorious Qur'ān when I was seven years old. I moved to Baghdād at the age of thirteen, and there I studied under the religious scholars [*'ulamā*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them). I continued my pursuit of learning, and I used to worship in my mosque outside the city. One night, while I was sleeping, I saw [Abū Bakr] the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him). 'O 'Alī,' he said to me, 'I have been commanded to invest you with this skullcap [*tāqīyya*].' He produced it from inside his sleeve, and placed it on my head. Then, a few days later, al-Khiḍr<sup>192</sup> (peace be upon him) came to me and said: 'O 'Alī, you must go out to the people, for they will derive great benefit from you.'

““I went about my usual business, then I came home to sleep. I saw the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in my dream, and he repeated what al-Khiḍr had told me.

<sup>191</sup> See p. 341 above.

<sup>192</sup> See note 14 on p. 41 above.

Again I went about my usual business, but then, the next night, I saw the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and he repeated what the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had told me. I woke up, and resolved on going out [to the people]. Then I went back to sleep for the rest of the night, and I saw the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He). ‘O My servant,’ He said to me, ‘I have installed you among My élite [*ṣafwa*] on My earth. I have supported you in all your states, with a Spirit [*Rūḥ*] from Me, and I have established you as a mercy to My creatures. You must therefore go out to them, share with them the wisdom I have taught you, and show them My signs, which I have confirmed for you.’ I woke up at once, and went out to the people, who soon came flocking to me.”””

The scholars and the Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) were unanimous in declaring him worthy of the greatest honor and respect. Visitors came to him from all the countries and regions, bringing votive offerings with them, and his fame spread to the farthest horizons.

Shaikh ‘Alī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had a fine way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*]. Here are some of his noteworthy sayings:

- If someone loves the Lord of Truth, and wishes to find Him, he must cause that wish to dwell within his heart.

- The seeker is a lover, engaged in a quest, while the one who is sought is a loved one, the object of a quest [*al-murīd muḥibb ṭālīb wa ’l-murād maḥbūb maṭlūb*].

- When the seeker is sought, he is captured, wrested away, and drawn aside. Love’s ardor overwhelms and conquers him, for he has found what he was seeking. He has traveled the road and covered the distance. He has abandoned his personal identity, and forsaken it completely. He has erased all shades of color from his sight, so he no longer sees them.

- Abstinence [*zuḥd*] is an obligatory duty [*farīda*], a virtue [*faḍīla*], and a righteous work [*qurba*]. As an obligatory duty, it applies to that which is unlawful [*ḥarām*]. As a virtue, it applies to that which is of

dubious legality [*mutashābih*]. As a righteous work, it applies to that which is lawful [*ḥalāl*].

- Abstinence [*zuḥd*] is more comprehensive in scope than pious restraint [*wara’*], because pious restraint means approaching everything with caution, whereas abstinence means separation from everything.

- The mark of sincere devotion [*ikhlāṣ*] is that creatures [*khalq*] vanish from your sight, in the direct vision of the Truth [*Ḥaqq*], and that your personal extinction [*fanā’*] is permanent and everlasting.

- If someone relies, with his innermost being [*sirr*], on others apart from Allāh (Exalted is He), He will strip all sympathy for him from the hearts of those others, and clothe him in the garb of craving for them.

Shaikh ‘Alī would often quote these verses of poetry:

If they share a secret with someone, and he reveals it,  
they will not make him privy to secrets as long as he lives.

They will keep him at a distance, so he cannot enjoy their nearness,  
and treat him with alienation instead of intimate friendship.

They will not befriend a broadcaster, who publishes their secrets;  
far removed be their dignity, from that be it far removed!

Shaikh Muḥammad, the son of our master, Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Wabb (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), has informed us:

“In the time of my father, there was a native of Hamadān, a man called Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī, who experienced the loss of his spiritual state. All of his special qualities and attributes simply disappeared without trace. One of his spiritual faculties had been his ability to see all the way up from the realm of Sovereignty [*Malakūt*] to the Heavenly Throne [*‘Arsh*]. He traveled around and about, through all the towns and countries, but he found no one able to restore his spiritual state.

“Then he came to Shaikh ‘Alī, who welcomed him warmly and received him with honor. ‘O Shaikh Muḥammad,’ he said to his guest, ‘I shall restore to you your spiritual state, and more besides.’ Then he instructed him to close his eyes, so he closed them, and he could see all the way up from the highest realm of Sovereignty [*al-Malakūt al-a‘lā*] to the Heavenly Throne [*‘Arsh*]. Then Shaikh

‘Alī said to him: ‘There you have your former spiritual state. I shall now provide you with two more.’

“Then he instructed him to close his eyes, so he closed them, and he could see all the way down from the lowest realm of Sovereignty [*al-Malakūt al-asfal*] to the pit of the Great Beast, Behemoth [*Bahamūt*]. ‘This,’ said Shaikh ‘Alī, ‘is one [of the two additional states I promised]. As for the other, I have given you a special foot, with which you can step to all the far horizons.’ While one of his two feet was still in place beside Shaikh ‘Alī, Shaikh Muḥammad al-Hamadānī raised his other foot, and set it down in Hamadān. Such was the blessed grace of Shaikh ‘Alī. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

Shaikh ‘Alī’s son also said: “A group of paupers [*fuqarā*] once came to visit him, hoping that he could satisfy their appetite for something sweet. The Shaikh went into his kitchen, took the rind of a pomegranate, heated it at the fire, and poured the juice into a flask. Then he brought it out and set it in front of them. The sweetness they tasted was the best in this world, the finest and the most delicious.”

“On another occasion, a North African [*Maghribī*] called ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān came to visit the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and set before him an ingot of silver. ‘O my master,’ he said, ‘this is a sample of my workmanship, produced for the benefit of the paupers.’ The Shaikh turned to the paupers who were present in his company, and said: ‘If some of you have utensils made of copper, bring them here to me.’ They brought him many such utensils, and stacked them in the middle of the convent [*ẓāwīya*].

“The Shaikh stepped over them, and some of them turned into gold, and some into silver, with the exception of two finger-bowls. Then the Shaikh said to the owners of the utensils: ‘Whoever has a utensil here, let him take it!’ So they took them, in the form of gold and silver. Then the Shaikh said to ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān: ‘O my dear son, Allāh (Exalted is He) has given me all of this, but we have abandoned it, for we have no need of it. Take your ingot away!’

“When someone asked him why the utensils had been affected in different ways, he explained: ‘If someone brought a utensil, and there was no diffidence at all in his feeling, it turned into gold. If there

was an element of diffidence in his feeling, his utensil turned into silver. If his attitude toward me was malevolent, the condition of his utensil remained unchanged.”

According to one report: “The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to till the land with a plow drawn by two cows, though he never touched them with his hand. When he told them to stop, they would stop, and when he told them to walk, they would walk. He would sometimes sow seeds of wheat and other grains, and the plants would immediately sprout up behind him.

“A cow of his once died, so he came and grabbed it by its horn, crying: ‘O Allāh, restore it to life for my sake!’ The cow stood up at once, shaking the dust from its ears. May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!”

To put it in a nutshell, his charismatic exploits [*manāqib*] are many and widely known.

Shaikh 'Alī ibn Wabb (may Allāh be well pleased with them both) lived in al-Badriyya, a village in the province of Sinjār. It was there that he died, when he was more than eighty years old. His tomb is a prominent site in that locality, and visits are often paid to it.

He was an excellent scholar, remarkable for his eloquence and his modest humility. He did not swear by Allāh (Exalted is He), and he did not raise his head toward heaven, from a sense of shame in the presence of Allāh (Exalted is He).

He was a Bedouin [*Badawī*], from the tribe of Banī Rabī'a Shaibānī. May Allāh be well pleased with him! This Cardinal Pole [*Quṭb*], this perfect and practicing scholar, this Shaikh endowed with charismatic talents, was indeed a member of our own tribe, the Banī Rabī'a, although he is not mentioned by that erudite researcher, my paternal cousin, ar-Riḍawī Raḍī ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥanifī (may Allāh treat him with His mysterious grace), in his compilation entitled *al-Mawsūm bi'l-Āthār ar-Rafī'a fī Ma'āthir Banī Rabī'a* [Definitive Record of Lofty Traces, Concerning the Accomplishments of the Banī Rabī'a].

## 14. Shaikh Mūsā ibn Māhān az-Zuwalī

**A**s for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Mūsā ibn Māhān (or, as some say, ibn Māhīn) az-Zuwalī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the finest of the Shaikhs, and one of the most splendid. He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) presents to His creatures in high profile, for He instilled respect for him in their hearts, caused him to speak about the hidden mysteries, and granted him opportunities beyond the ordinary. The Shaikhs, and others too, unanimously acknowledged his preeminence.

Many of the Shaikhs of the East received their education from him. His students included a host of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, and a vast number of seekers became affiliated to him.

He was held in high esteem by our own Shaikh, our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who frequently extolled his merit. “O people of Baghdād,” he once said, “a sun is about to rise above you, the like of which has never before risen above you!” When people asked: “And who may he be?” he replied: “Shaikh Mūsā az-Zuwalī (may Allāh be well pleased with him).” Then he instructed the people to greet him, at the end of a two-day journey. When Shaikh Mūsā arrived, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) received him with great honor. He had come to Baghdād while traveling as a Pilgrim [Hājj]. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

Shaikh Mūsā had a fine way of speaking, in the language of those who are skilled in the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*]. He was someone whose prayer of supplication was sure to be answered [*mujāb ad-da‘wa*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him! If he prayed on behalf of a blind man, the blind man’s sight was sure to be restored. If he invoked blindness upon a seeing person, that person was sure to lose his eyesight. If he prayed on behalf of a pauper, the pauper

was sure to be enriched. If he invoked poverty on a rich man, the rich man was sure to be impoverished. If he prayed on behalf of a disabled person or an invalid, the person concerned was sure to be cured and restored to good health. If he prayed for someone to be blessed in some undertaking, that blessing was sure to be granted. The response to his supplication was always immediately apparent. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

It was Aḥmad al-Māridinī who said: “I heard the following accounts from my father, who reported them from his own father:

“For Shaikh Mūsā az-Zuwalī, the vision of Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) was a frequent experience, and his spiritual states were received through his enabling grace [*tawfiq*] (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

“Whenever the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) touched iron with his hand, the metal would soften, until it became as fluid as water.

“A woman once came to him, carrying a baby boy, who was only four months old. The Shaikh called the infant to him, and he came running into his arms. Then he told him to recite:

Say: “He is Allāh, One!”  
*qul Huwa ’llāhu Aḥad.* (112:1)

“The child responded by reciting the Sūra of Sincere Devotion [*Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*] from beginning to end,<sup>193</sup> with an eloquent tongue. From that time on, he retained the ability to walk and speak. When he was seen much later, after the Shaikh’s death, he was thirty years of age, and his eloquence was as fluent as it had been when he first spoke, as a baby in front of the Shaikh. He was called by the surname Abū Masrūr [Father of a Happy Child].”

<sup>193</sup> This Sūra of the Qur’ān consists of four verses [*āyāt*], namely:

Say: “He is Allāh, One!  
*qul Huwa ’llāhu Aḥad:*  
 Allāh, the Everlasting Refuge!  
*Allāhu ’ṣ-Ṣamad:*  
 He does not beget, nor was He begotten;  
*lam yalid wa lam yūlad:*  
 and there is none comparable unto Him.”  
*wa lam yakun la-hu kufiwan aḥad.* (112:1–4)

Shaikh Mūsā az-Zuwalī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) spent his life in Māridīn, and it was there that he died. His tomb is a prominent site in that locality, and visits are often paid to it. When he was laid to rest in his tomb, he stood erect and performed the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], while the grave expanded to give him enough space. This caused a fainting fit to descend on all those who had come to bury him.

He was radiantly beautiful, and worthy of profound respect. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



## 15. Shaikh Raslān ad-Dimashqī

One of the leading Shaikhs who paid glowing tribute to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was that splendid exemplar, Shaikh Raslān ad-Dimashqī (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

He was one of the preeminent Shaikhs of Syria, one of those remarkable individuals who know through direct experience [*a’yān al-‘arīfīn*], and one of those who are outstanding on account of their superior skills. He was endowed with lofty indications, with elevated aspirations, with truthful expressions, with supernatural charismatic exploits [*karāmāt khāriqa*], with majestic spiritual stations, and with exalted situations. He held the highest degree of directly acquired forms of knowledge [*ma‘ārīf*], the loftiest position in the realm of the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*], and the foremost standing in nearness, clear unveiling and brilliant illumination [*fath*], as well as a firmly established empowerment and an effective aptitude for management.

He is one of the leading figures of this [spiritual] business, and one of its pillars, in terms of learning [*‘ilm*] and practice [*‘amal*], real achievement [*taḥqīq*], direct knowledge [*ma‘rifa*], and indifference to worldly concerns [*zuhd*]. He is one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has brought to the notice of his fellow creatures, and upon whom He has conferred acceptance and abundant veneration in their sight. He put him in firm possession of the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] and of sainthood [*wilāya*], made him privy to the mysteries of the universe [*asrār al-kawn*], and granted him freedom of disposal in the realm of existence [*wujūd*]. At his hands, He manifested wondrous marvels, for his sake He disrupted the customary patterns of nature, and He appointed him as a leader [*imām*] for the spiritual travelers [*sālikīn*].

He eventually became responsible for the training of all the seekers [*murīdīn*] in Syria. A group of its Shaikhs became affiliated to him,

and not a few of its inhabitants enjoyed the benefit of his fellowship. The religious scholars [*‘ulamā’*] and the elders (may Allāh be well pleased with them) pointed him out with profound respect and reverent admiration. Various animals used for transport alighted in his courtyard, arriving from every direction and by every route, and riders followed in his tracks from every deep ravine [*min kulli fajjin ‘amīq*].<sup>194</sup>

Shaikh Raslān ad-Dimashqī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was charming, graceful, courteous and humble. He combined the most noble traits of character, the most perfect manners, and the most excellent attributes. He was also endowed with a sublime way of speaking about the process of real experiences [*minhāj al-ḥaqā’iq*].

He explained, for instance, that one who knows by experience [*al-‘ārif*] is closely monitored in everything by his direct vision [*mushāhada*], and that intimate knowledge [*ma‘rifa*] becomes manifest in the revelation of insight. This is because one who knows by direct experience has already reached his spiritual destination [*al-‘ārif wāsil*], but then the secrets of Allāh (Exalted is He) are conveyed to him in a complete totality, by the lights that make him privy to the facts of the unseen [*shawāhid al-ghaib*], and privy to the secret of control.

Thus he is taken from his own person [*nafs*], then restored to his own person, firmly established in his heart. His being taken from his own person is an act of bringing near [to the Lord], while his being restored to his own person is a training exercise [*tahdhīb*], and his self-control is a special assignment [*takhṣīṣ*]. The bringing near [*taqrīb*] causes him to witness, the training causes him to exist, and the special assignment gives him a separate identity. Thus his separate identity [*tafrīd*] is his existence [*wujūd*], his existence is his witnessing [*shuhūd*], and his witnessing is his witnessing. As Allāh (Exalted is He) has told us:

The eyes do not perceive Him,  
*lā tudriku-hu ‘l-abṣāru*  
 but He perceives the eyes.  
*wa Huwa yudriku ‘l-abṣār. (6:104)*

—so His perceiving of the eyes is witnessed by the faculties of insight [*baṣā’ir*].

<sup>194</sup> An allusion to Q. 22:27.

It was the enlightened Shaikh Abū Muḥammad Ibrāhīm ibn Maḥmūd al-Ya‘lā who said:

“One day in the springtime, Shaikh Raslān (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was in one of the gardens of Damascus, together with a group of his companions. One of them said to him: ‘O my master, what is the saint [*walī*] who is fully endowed with the principles of enablement [*aḥkām at-tamkīn*].’ ‘My dear young son,’ he replied, ‘he is the one whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has invested with the reins of management [*taṣrīf*].’ His companion then asked: ‘What is the distinctive mark of that condition, O my master?’

“The Shaikh responded by picking up four twigs. He singled out one of them and said: ‘This twig represents the summer. He singled out another and said: ‘This twig stands for the fall, the autumn season.’ He singled out another and said: ‘This one represents the winter.’ Then he singled out yet another and said: ‘This one stands for the spring.’ He then took the twig which he had designated for the summer, and waved it to and fro with his hand. As he did so, the weather grew intensely hot. Then he threw that twig away, picked out the one he had designated for the fall or autumn, and waved it to and fro. As he did so, along came all the typical features of autumn and the season of the fall. Then he threw that twig away, picked out the one he had designated for the winter, and waved it to and fro. As he did so, the winter winds began to blow, the weather grew bitterly cold, and then the leaves began to wither on the trees in the garden, and so on. Then he threw that twig away, held onto the one he had designated for the spring, and waved it to and fro. As he did so, the trees turned green with fresh leaves, the branches began to blossom, and the breezes of springtime blew.

“Then he gazed at the birds on the trees in the garden. He went over to one of the trees, gave it a shake, and signaled to the bird perched on it: ‘Glorify your Creator!’ The bird responded by warbling a most lovely tune, filling the listeners with sheer delight. Then he moved over to another tree, and did the same again, and so on, until he had come to each of the trees. Of all the birds, only one had failed to break into song, so the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said to it: ‘May you not stay alive!’—and it promptly fell dead on the ground.”

On another occasion, fifteen men came to visit him, but the only food he had in store consisted of five flat loaves of bread. He set these before them, after crumbling them with careful precision, and said: "In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate. O Allāh, bless us in what you have provided for us, for You are the Best of providers!" Even when they had eaten till their hunger was fully satisfied, a quantity was still left over, so he divided it amongst them, piece by piece, and they traveled on to Baghdād, eating from it throughout the entire length of their journey.

It was Abū Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Kurdī who said:

"I once saw the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) traveling through the air. At one time he would be walking, at one time he would be traveling in a cross-legged posture, at one time he would be flying by like an arrow, and at one time he would be passing over the water."

He went on to say: "I also saw him at 'Arafāt, and at all the sacred shrines [*mashā'ir*]. Then I lost sight of him, so when I came to Damascus I asked the people of that city about him, and they told me: 'By Allāh, he has not been absent from us for as much as one whole day, except on the Day of 'Arafa, part of the Day of Sacrifice [*Yawm an-Naḥr*], and the Days of Tashriq.'"

He also said: "I saw him sitting one day with a lion snuggled against his feet, but he was too absorbed to take the slightest notice of the lion.

"One day I saw him on the outskirts of Damascus, throwing pebbles, so I asked him to explain, and he said: 'These are arrows, aimed at the Franks.' At that very point in time, the Franks had moved out toward the coast, pursued by an army of the Muslims. Shortly after that, people said: 'We saw pebbles descending from the sky, raining down through the air upon the heads of the Franks.' A large number of them perished because of the stones cast by the Shaikh. It even happened that a single pebble would strike a mounted knight, and he and his horse would both be destroyed, through the grace of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him)."

He kept a residence (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in Damascus, which he regarded as his home town, and it was there that he died. He was buried on its outskirts, and his tomb is a conspicuous

site, regularly visited down to this day of ours. While his bier was being carried on the necks of the bearers, green birds attended and perched on his bier. The people also saw cavaliers mounted on gray horses, circling around the funeral procession. They had never seen them before, nor did they ever see them afterwards. May Allāh be well pleased with him!



## 16. Shaikh Abu 'n-Najīb as-Suhrawardī (A.H. 490–563)

**A**s for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Ḍiyā' ad-Dīn Abu 'n-Najīb 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Bakrī, widely known as as-Suhrawardī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the preeminent Shaikhs of 'Irāq. He was one of the leaders of those who know by direct experience [*ṣudūr al-ʿarīfīn*], one of the most outstanding of those who specialize in Reality [*a'yān al-muhaqqiqīn*], and one of the standards of the scholars [*a'lām al-ʿulamā'*]. He was endowed with supernatural charismatic talents [*karāmāt khāriqa*], exceptional spiritual states, truthful utterances, and splendid insights.

He taught as a professor at the Nizāmiyya University in Baghdād, where he also achieved prominence in the issuing of formal legal opinion [*fatwā*]. He compiled useful books on the sciences of the Sacred Law [*Sharī'a*] and Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*], and he became the central point of reference for seekers of knowledge in Baghdād. He acquired the honorific titles *Mufti 'l-'Irāqain* [Legal Adviser of the Two 'Irāqs]<sup>195</sup> and *Qudwat al-Farīqain* [Exemplary Guide of the Two Parties].<sup>196</sup> He was brilliantly clear in explaining the spiritual states of the people [of the Spiritual Path].

He used to dress in the academic gown and shawl worn by religious scholars [*ʿulamā'*]. He used to ride on mules, and the saddlecloth would be raised in front of him [in his honor, when he set out to mount his mule].

He was one of the pillars of this [spiritual] business, one of its principal leaders, one of its most excellent guides, and one of its chief

<sup>195</sup> As this title indicates, the Shaikh was an expert jurist, qualified to issue formal opinions on questions of Islāmic law, and he was equally recognized as such in both Arab 'Irāq [*'Irāq al-ʿArab*] and Persian 'Irāq [*'Irāq al-ʿAjām*].

<sup>196</sup> In this context, the "Two Parties [*Farīqain*]" can probably be taken as a reference to the academic religious scholars [*ʿulamā'*] and the Shaikhs of the Spiritual Path.

missionaries. His footing was firmly established in effectiveness, and the span of his arm was far-reaching in the sphere of the most noble virtues. The Shaikhs and scholars were unanimous in declaring him worthy of the highest dignity, honor and respect, and Allāh (Exalted is He) instilled love for him in the hearts of His servants.

More than a few of the eminent Shaikhs received their education in his fellowship, including his brother's son, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Umar as-Suhrawardī, and Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh ibn Mas'ūd ibn Maṭīr, to name only two of them. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

A vast number of the Ṣūfī Shaikhs became affiliated to him. His fame spread to the distant horizons, and visitors came to him from far and wide.

He had much to say about the realities [*ḥaqā'iq*], the training of spiritual seekers [*taslīk al-murīdīn*], and the modes of conduct proper to the truthful [*ādāb aṣ-ṣādiqīn*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him! Here are some of his well-known sayings:

- Spiritual states are the transactions of the inner feelings [*al-aḥwāl mu'āmalāt al-qulūb*]. They are experiences induced by the qualities inherent in the practices of remembrance [*adhkār*]. The first of these is vigilant awareness [*murāqaba*]. Then comes nearness [*qurb*] in the presence of Allāh (Exalted is He). Then comes love [*maḥabba*], which means that the lover is in harmony with his Beloved. Then comes fear [*khawf*]. Then comes the sense of shame [*ḥayā'*]. Then comes intimate friendship [*uns*]. Then comes certainty [*yaqīn*]. Then comes direct witnessing [*mushāhada*]. It may also happen that someone, in his state of nearness, beholds the Majesty of Allāh (Exalted is He), and is thus overwhelmed by love and hope [*raǧā'*].

- The first stage of the Ṣūfī path [*taṣawwuf*] is knowledge [*'ilm*], the middle stage is practice [*'amal*], and the final stage is an inspired talent [*mawhibā*]. Knowledge discloses the object of the quest. Practice keeps attention focused on the quest. The inspired talent reaches the ultimate hope.

- As for the people who follow the Ṣūfī path, they fall into three categories: (1) the novice seeker [*murīd ṭālib*]; (2) the traveler at the halfway stage [*mutawassiṭ sā'ir*]; and (3) the one who has reached his final destination [*muntahī wāṣil*].

•The novice is presented with an opportunity [*al-murīd ṣāhib waqt*]. The intermediate traveler is equipped with a spiritual state [*al-mutawassit ṣāhib ḥāl*]. The one who has arrived is endowed with certainty [*al-muntahī ṣāhib yaqīn*].

•As far as they [the Ṣūfis] are concerned, the best of all things is the counting of breaths.

•The stage of the novice [*murīd*] calls for dedicated efforts, painful struggles of endurance, the swallowing of bitter pills, the avoidance of pleasures, and the abandonment of self-interest.

•The stage of the intermediate traveler [*mutawassit*] is traversed by surmounting terrors in pursuit of the desired goal, by paying strict attention to truthfulness with regard to spiritual states, and by practicing good conduct at every station, for he is obliged to observe the manners appropriate to every situation. He is a master of diversity [*ṣāhib talwīn*], for he is progressing from state to state, as he keeps gaining ground.

•As for the station of one who has finally arrived [*muntahī*], its point of entry is total clarity of consciousness [*ṣaḥw*]. Then comes the realization of permanence [*thabāt*], and the response of the Lord of Truth whenever he calls upon Him. Having passed through all the intervening stages, he is now at the point of establishment. He is no longer altered by changing states [*aḥwāl*], nor is he affected by alarming terrors [*aḥwāl*]. He steadily maintains his equilibrium in hardship and in ease, in deprivation and abundance, in the rough and the smooth. His eating is like his hunger, and his sleeping is like his wakefulness. His outer being [*ẓāhir*] is with his fellow creatures [*khalq*], while his inner being [*bāṭin*] is with the Lord of Truth [*Ḥaqq*].

According to traditional reports, all of this is applicable to the spiritual states of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

Here is a typical specimen of the Shaikh's poetry:

O chieftains! Construct a house inside my heart,  
which will serve as a substitute for ordinary walls.

Stand firm, as long as you are its occupants,  
for the well-being of homes depends on their occupants.

And marvel at the grief of my afflicted heart.  
Glory to Him who has treated you well, and tested me!

It was Shaikh al-Imām Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Umar as-Suhrawardī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: "Whenever our own Shaikh, my paternal uncle, Ḍiyā' ad-Dīn Abu 'n-Najīb 'Abd al-Qāhir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), regarded a seeker [*murīd*] with the eye of providential care [*'ināya*], he always made excellent progress, and became a brilliant pupil. Whenever the Shaikh installed a man in the chamber of retreat [*khalwa*], he would go in to see him every day, and conduct a review of his spiritual states. He would say to him: 'You will experience such-and-such tonight. You will be endowed with such-and-such a state, and such-and-such a station. A devil [*shaiṭān*] will come to you in such-and-such a guise, at such-and-such a time. You must be on your guard against him, for [despite his harmless appearance] he really is a devil.' That man would invariably experience everything the Shaikh had described to him."

Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn also said: "One day, when I was in my uncle's presence, a Sawādī (that is to say, a peasant farmer [*fallāh*]) brought him a calf. 'O my master,' he said, 'this is the offering I vowed to bring you.' Then he went on his way, and the Shaikh said: 'This calf is telling me: "I am not the calf he dedicated to you. I was actually dedicated to Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī. As for the calf he dedicated to you, that is my brother.'

"We did not have long to wait, before the Sawādī came back with another calf. 'O my master,' he said, 'I mistook the first calf for this, which is the one I had dedicated to you. The first belongs to Shaikh 'Alī ibn al-Hitī.' Then he took it away with him."

Shaikh Muḥammad 'Abdu'llāh ibn Mas'ūd ar-Rūmī has told us: "Together with our own Shaikh, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qāhir as-Suhrawardī, I once passed by the Devils' Market [*Sūq ash-Shayāṭīn*] in Baghdād. He looked at the skinned carcass of a sheep, hanging in a butcher's shop, and he said to the butcher: 'This sheep is telling me that it is unlawful meat [*maita*].'<sup>197</sup> The man swooned, then he confessed that this was true, and repented at the Shaikh's hand.

"On another occasion, the Shaikh and I crossed a bridge together. He saw a man carrying a piece of fruit, so he said to him: 'Sell me

<sup>197</sup> The term *maita* is applied to the meat of an animal that has not been slaughtered in accordance with the ritual requirements of Islāmic law.

that fruit!’ When the man asked why he wanted to buy it, he said: ‘Because it is saying to me: “Save me from this man, for he bought me with the intention of steeping me in wine!”’ The man fainted, and fell flat on his face. Then, as soon as he had recovered his senses, he came to the Shaikh and repented at his hand. ‘By Allāh,’ he exclaimed, ‘no one could have known what the Shaikh told me about my condition, apart from Allāh (Exalted is He)!’

“One day, when the Shaikh and I were passing through Karkh, we heard the voices of some drunkards in a house nearby. The Shaikh stepped into the hallway, and performed two cycles of ritual prayer [*rakʿatain*]. All the occupants then emerged as righteously sober men. We went inside the house, and found that their wine had turned into water. They all repented at the hand of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) spent most of his life in Baghdād, and it was there that he died, on the night of Saturday the 18th of Jumādā ’l-Ūlā, in the year [A.H.] 563. He was born in Suhraward (or, as some say, Shahrazūr) in the year [A.H.] 490.”

The following is a quotation from “The Splendor of the Mysteries” [*Bahjat al-Asrār*], by Shaikh Nūr ad-Dīn ‘Alī ash-Shāfi‘ī al-Lakhmī:

“He is Shaikh Ḍiyā’ ad-Dīn (also surnamed Najīb ad-Dīn) Abu ’n-Najīb ‘Abd al-Qāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdi’llāh al-Ma’rūf-bi-‘Amawiyya ibn Sa’id ibn al-Ḥusain ibn al-Qāsim ibn an-Naṣr ibn al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdi’llāh ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq (may Allāh be well pleased with him) as-Suhruwardī.”<sup>198</sup>

According to Ibn an-Najjār, at the end of his biography [*tarjama*] of his brother’s son, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Umar (of whom we shall have more to say in due course):<sup>199</sup>

“Suhraward<sup>200</sup> is a town near Zanjān, in Persian ‘Irāq [*‘Irāq al-‘Ajam*].” (Here ends the quotation. Allāh knows best [which spelling is correct].)

<sup>198</sup> In the original text, this quotation ends with the technical Arabic equivalent of: “[Suhruwardī is spelled] with <-u-> after the initial <S> and another <-u-> after the [first] <-r->.”

<sup>199</sup> See p. 463 below.

<sup>200</sup> In the original text, <Suhraward> is spelled out, letter by letter, in the appropriate Arabic terminology: *bi-ḍamm as-sin al-muḥmala wa sukūn al-hā’ wa fath ar-rā’ wa ’l-wāw wa sukūn ar-rā’ ath-thāniya wa fi ākhiri-hā dāl muḥmala’ d-dāl al-muḥmala*.

According to as-Sam‘ānī: “He is ‘Abd al-Qāhir ibn ‘Abdi’llāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Amawiyya ‘Abdi’llāh ibn Sa‘d ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Qāsim ibn ‘Alqama ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq (may Allāh be well pleased with him).”

According to Muḥammad al-Qābisī: “He was one of the sons of Emir Ḥashwiyya al-Kurdī, and he was not a Bakrī [descendant of Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq (may Allāh be well pleased with him)].” Allāh knows best.



## 17. Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Baṣrī (d. A.H. 580)

As for Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn ‘Abd al-Baṣrī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the preeminent Shaikhs of ‘Irāq. He was one of those scholars whose knowledge is based on direct experience [*‘ulamā’ ‘ārifīn*], and one of the most splendid of those who are drawn near [to the Lord]. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], brilliant spiritual states, supernatural feats [*aḡ‘āl khāriqa*], and truthful utterances. He held the highest degrees of the stations of nearness. He mounted the lofty stairway to the sessions of Holiness [*majālis al-Quds*], and his footing was firmly established in effectiveness.

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has presented in high profile to the existing universe [*wujūd*], and whom He has charged with the administration of the realm of being [*kawn*]. Allāh (Exalted is He) placed material substances at his disposal, disrupted the customary patterns of nature for his benefit, and instilled enormous respect and complete veneration for him in the breasts of His creatures.

He was one of those scholars who put their knowledge into practice [*‘ulamā’ ‘āmilīn*], for he combined the two sciences, the science of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*] and the science of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*]. [In the field of Islāmic jurisprudence] he adhered to the doctrine [*madhhab*] of Imām Mālik ibn Anas<sup>201</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him). The pen of the *fatwā* [formal opinion on questions of Islāmic law] was submitted to him, in his own town [of Baṣra] and in the neighboring regions.

<sup>201</sup> Imām Mālik ibn Anas (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was the founder of one of the four schools [*madhāhib*] of Islamic jurisprudence. He died in the year A.H. 179/795 C.E.

The leadership of this [spiritual] business devolved upon him in his day and age, in the spheres of knowledge and practice [*‘ilm wa ‘amal*], spiritual state and verbal utterance [*ḥāl wa maqāl*]. His authority was paramount in the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*], in Baṣra and the neighboring regions. Of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, a considerable number received their education in his fellowship, and subsequently propagated his teaching.

He was held in high esteem by the scholars and the Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them all), who treated him with honor and respect, and frequently turned to him for advice. He used to give lectures in Baṣra, on the sciences of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*] and Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*]. He spoke from an elevated lectern, and the Shaikhs and scholars (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) were always in attendance at his sessions [*majālis*].

Shaikh Abū Muḥammad had a exquisite way of speaking about the path of the realities [*minhāj al-ḥaqā’iq*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- The rejection [*juḥūd*] of that which is not reported by a direct witness [*shāhid*] is confirmed [*mashhūd*].

- The direct witness of the Truth [*shāhid al-Ḥaqq*] transcends the witnessing of ordinary existence [*shuhūd al-wujūd*], and passes beyond the drowsy eye. His exhilaration far exceeds the exhilaration caused by drinking wine.

- The spirits of those who experience ecstasy [*arwāḥ al-wājidīn*] are fragrantly perfumed. Their speech revives the dead at heart, and increases their faculties of understanding.

- Ecstasy [*wajd*] does away with differentiation, converting all separate places into one single place, and all separate entities into one single entity. It begins with the lifting of the veil, the vision of the Watchful Guardian [*Raqīb*], the presence of understanding, the viewing of the Unseen [*Ghaib*], conversing with the secret, and despairing of the nonexistent.

- The genuineness of ecstasy [*wajd*] depends on severance of the properties of human nature [*awṣāf al-bashariyya*] from all attachment.

• Ecstasy [*wajd*] annihilates. For one who has no experience of loss, there can be no experience of finding.

• The word “life [*ḥayāt*]” denotes three meanings, namely:

1. The life of knowledge [*ḥayāt al-‘ilm*], which has three breaths: the breath of fear [*khawf*], the breath of hope [*rajā’*], and the breath of love [*mahabba*].

2. The life of union [*ḥayāt al-jam’*] after the death of separation [*mawt al-furqa*]. This life has three breaths: the breath of compulsion [*iḍṭirār*], the breath of need [*iftiqār*], and the breath of exultation [*iftikhār*].

3. The life of existence [*ḥayāt al-wujūd*] after the death of heedlessness [*mawt al-ghafla*]. This is the life of the Truth [*ḥayāt al-Ḥaqq*]. It also has three breaths: the breath of reverent awe [*haiba*], the breath of existence [*wujūd*], and the breath of singularity [*infirād*].

• If someone belittles the secret of Allāh (Exalted is He), Allāh (Exalted is He) will cause his tongue to speak of his personal faults and failings.

It was that exemplary guide, the Shaikh of the Ṣūfīs, Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Umar as-Suhrawardī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who said:

“I once traveled down to Baṣra to visit the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him). On my way there, I passed by many cattle, crops and date palms, so I thought to myself: ‘I must be experiencing the spiritual state of kings.’ As I entered Baṣra, I was reciting the Sūra of Cattle [*Sūrat al-An‘ām*], so I said to myself: ‘I wonder which verse [*āya*] I shall have reached, by the time I arrive at the Shaikh’s house?’ That will surely be a good omen [*fa’l*] for my visit with him.’ At the moment when I set my foot on the threshold of his house, I was reciting:

Those are they whom Allāh guides,  
*ulā’ika ‘lladhīna hada ‘llāhu*  
 so follow their guidance.  
*fa-bi-hudā-humu ‘qtadi-h.* (6:90)

“His personal servant met me at the door, and instructed me to enter, at the Shaikh’s command, before I had even asked his permission. When I entered his presence, the first thing the Shaikh

said to me was: ‘O ‘Umar, as for everything that is upon the earth, it is upon the earth, and nothing of it is inside my heart.’ Great indeed was my astonishment, at his knowledge of something that no one, apart from Allāh (Exalted is He), could have known about me.”

Shaikh ‘Alī al-Khabbāz has told us: “I was once in an orchard in Baṣra, together with its owner, who was one of my companions. In came a dusty, disheveled pauper [*faqīr*], who said to the owner of the orchard: ‘Give me some figs, enough to satisfy my appetite!’ My friend presented him with a helping of figs, and he ate them up, then he said: ‘Give me more!’ He gave him another helping, and he ate them up, then he said: ‘Give me more!’ He kept giving him helping after helping, until he had eaten the weight of a thousand *raṭl*.<sup>202</sup> Then the pauper went to a nearby stream, and started scooping water from it. He drank a huge amount of water from the stream, then he went on his way.

“After some years had elapsed, the owner of the orchard told me that the quantity of its annual produce had multiplied many times over. Then, in the year when he told me this, I went on the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*]. One day, while I was walking along by myself, in front of the caravan, I found myself thinking about the condition of that man, and I wished that I could see him. To my amazement, he appeared there and then, at my right-hand side. I saluted him with the greeting of peace, and we continued our journey, he and I, walking along together. Whenever he sat down to rest, the entire caravan would come to a halt, and as soon as he started walking, the whole caravan would move forward.

“One day, we came to a large lake, the water of which had subsided to the bottom, so he carved out a lump of clay, and made a meal of it. Then he fed me some of that clay, and it tasted like a delicious fruit pudding, with an aroma like that of fragrant musk. He also drank a lot of the [apparently stagnant] water. Then he said to me: ‘O ‘Alī, this is the first meal I have eaten, since that one you saw me eat [in the orchard]. I have done no eating or drinking in the meantime.’

“‘O my master,’ said I, ‘how did you come to be as you are?’ He said: ‘Shaikh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Baṣrī once cast a glance upon

<sup>202</sup> The *raṭl* or *riṭl* is a measure of weight, varying from country to country; approximately equal to one pound in ‘Irāq.

me, so my heart was filled with love, and my innermost being [*sirr*] attained to my Lord (Glory be to Him, and Exalted is He). All the realms of being were folded up for me, and all substances were transformed for my benefit. Through that glance of his, the remote was brought near to me, and I reached the desired goal. He clothed me with a spiritual essence, which rid me of the need for food and drink, except at the point of contact with humanity.' Then he disappeared from my sight, and I have never seen him since that moment."

May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

Shaikh Abū 'Abdi'llāh al-Balkhī has told us: "I was in the environs of Mecca (may Allāh the Exalted ennoble that city), when Shaikh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Baṣrī entered the Station [*Maqām*],<sup>203</sup> accompanied by four individuals. He led them in the performance of several cycles of ritual prayer [*raka'āt*], then they circumambulated [the Ka'ba] for a week. Then they went out through the Banī Shaiba Gate. When I tried to follow them, one of them turned me away, but the Shaikh said: 'Let him be!' Then he halted in front of the group, and made them stand still. Then he instructed each one of them to step into the footprint of the man in front of him. Then we continued on our journey.

"We reached the Pleasant City [*Ṭaiba*] [of Medina], so we visited [the tomb of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace)], and there we performed the midday prayer [*ẓuhr*]. Then we moved on, and performed the afternoon prayer [*'aṣr*] in Jerusalem [*Bait al-Maqdis*], then the sunset prayer [*maghrib*] at the Wall of Gog and Magog [*Sadd Ya'jūj wa Ma'jūj*],<sup>204</sup> then the late evening prayer [*'ishā'*] on Mount Qāf.<sup>205</sup>

"The Shaikh sat on a peak of the Mount, while we formed a circle around him. Men came to him, like lions, from all the regions of the Mount. Lights shone for them, brighter than the sun and the moon.

<sup>203</sup> The Ka'ba in the Sanctuary at Mecca is known as the House of Allāh [*Baitu 'llāh*]. It is also called His Station [*Maqām*], because it is there that the pilgrims stand in readiness to perform their prayers and other rites of worship.

<sup>204</sup> The Wall of Gog and Magog [*Sadd Ya'jūj wa Ma'jūj*], also known as the Wall of Alexander [*Sadd Iskandar*], was built in prehistoric times, along the crest of the Caucasus, as a defense against the tribes from the north.

<sup>205</sup> See note 47 on p. 81 above.

They saluted him with the greeting of peace, and took their seats. Then other men descended upon him from the atmosphere, like streaks of lightning. They surrounded him and asked him to speak, so he delivered a speech. Some of them sparkled with flashes of lightning, some of them roared like thunder, and some of them raced through the air. This went on until the rising of the dawn [*fajr*], when he led them in the performance of the ritual prayer.

“Then we climbed down to a land abounding in radiant lights, the fragrance of which was like musk. It was occupied by ghostly groups, like the shapes of human beings [*ādamiyyīn*], who were chanting the remembrance of Allāh (Exalted is He) in beautiful voices. The Shaikh moved among them, glorifying the Lord. Ecstasy [*wajd*] would sometimes make him weave to right and left. He would sometimes pass straight through the space above, flying like an arrow. At times he would exclaim: ‘Have mercy upon him, the reins of whose affairs are in Your hands!’

“Then he returned to the spot from which we had come, and we finally arrived in a city built of gold and silver. Rivers flowed there, and fruits grew in abundance, so we ate and drank, then each of us plucked an apple for dessert. The Shaikh said: ‘This is the city of the saints [*awliyā’*]. Only a saint [*walī*] can enter it.’ Then we returned to Mecca, and there we performed the midday prayer [*ẓuhr*]. He asked me to keep that experience a secret, so long as he was still alive. May Allāh (Exalted is He) be well pleased with him!”

Shaikh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Baṣrī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) spent most of his life in Baṣra. When he died there, in the year [A.H.] 580, he had reached a very advanced age. He was buried in that city, and his tomb is a prominent site, to which visits are frequently paid. While his funeral prayer was being performed, the birds could be heard flapping their wings in the air. A sizeable group of Jews and Christians embraced Islām on that day. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!

## 18. Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Jawsaqī

Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Jawsaqī was one of the most distinguished Shaikhs of 'Irāq. He was one of the most outstanding of those who know by direct experience [*ʿarīfīn*], and of those who are endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], brilliant innermost beings [*asrār*], supernatural spiritual states [*aḥwāl khāriqa*], sublime spiritual stations, and positions of high rank.

The span of his arm was far-reaching in the sphere of effective disposition [*taṣrīf*], and his hand extended far into the sciences of direct witnessing [*ʿulūm al-mushāhadāt*]. His footing was firmly established in enablement [*tamkīn*], and he stood at the highest level in the degrees of holiness [*quds*]. He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) presents in high profile to His creatures, for He granted him freedom of disposal in the realm of existence [*wujūd*]. By enabling him to master the states of the ultimate stage of spiritual progress, He made him privy to the secrets of sainthood [*wilāya*]. For his sake He disrupted the customary patterns of nature, and He manifested wondrous marvels at his hands. He caused him to speak about the hidden mysteries, and made wisdom flow upon his tongue. He filled the hearts of His servants with love for him, and instilled profound respect for him in their breasts.

Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan was one of the pillars of this [spiritual] business, and one of its principal masters, in terms of knowledge and practice [*ʿilm wa ʿamal*], indifference to worldly concerns [*zuhd*], real achievement [*tahqīq*] and leadership [*riyāsa*].

He joined the fellowship of Shaikh ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥiti, whose loyal servant he became, and to whom he used to trace his spiritual affiliation. He was also in frequent contact with our master, Shaikh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and he worked for some time as his servant. He met Ibn Baṭū, aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī, Abū Saʿīd al-Qailawī, and several other prominent Shaikhs.

The leadership of this [spiritual] business eventually devolved upon him, and many outstanding figures received their education from him. Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Baghdādī ibn Ḥubaish was one of those who declared their affiliation to him, and who derived great benefit from his fellowship. Many indeed were the righteous men who studied as his pupils.

He had a fine way of speaking about the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- The corruption of the religious scholars [*‘ulamā’*] is twofold: instead of acting on what they know, they act on what they do not know [*lā ya‘malūnabi-mā ya‘lamūnawaya‘malūnabi-mālā ya‘lamūn*], and they do not desist from what they forbid [*wa lā yantahūna ‘ammā yanhūn*].

- Useless talk, and hobnobbing with all and sundry, these are among the signs of retrogression.

- The signs of wretched misfortune [*shaqā’*] are three: (1) that someone is provided with knowledge, but deprived of action; (2) that he is provided with action, but deprived of sincere devotion [*ikhhlāṣ*]; and (3) that he is provided with the fellowship of those who know by direct experience [*‘arīfīn*], but he does not treat them with respect.

- Knowledge is a sanctuary, and ignorance is a delusion.

- Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] is a trusteeship [*amāna*].

- The maintenance of good relations [*ṣila*] is a guarantee of survival, and the rupture of relations [*qaṭī‘a*] is a catastrophe.

- Patience [*ṣabr*] is a form of courage.

- Lying is a disability, and truthfulness is a strength.

- Do not befriend someone, unless he drops all reticence between you, calls your attention to the manners of the Sacred Law [*Shar‘*], and jogs your memory in your moments of heedlessness.

Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to offer this prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*]:

O Allāh, O You of Whom it is true  
*Allāhumma yā man*

that there are no raindrops in the skies,  
*laisa fi 's-samāwāti min qatarāt*  
 and no seeds in the earth,  
*wa lā fi 'l-arḍi min ḥabbāt*  
 and no shifts in the blowing of the wind,  
*wa lā fi ḥubūbi 'r-rīḥi min walajāt*  
 and no feelings in people's hearts,  
*wa lā fi qulūbi 'l-khalqi min khaṭarāt*  
 and no movements in their limbs,  
*wa lā fi a'ḍā'i-him min ḥarakāt*  
 and no glances in their eyes—  
*wa lā fi a'yuni-him min laḥaẓāt*  
 unless they are bearing witness to You,  
*illā wa hiya la-ka shāhidāt*  
 and pointing the way to You,  
*wa 'alai-ka dāllāt*  
 and acknowledging Your Lordship,  
*wa bi-Rubūbiyyati-ka mu'tarifāt*  
 and bewildered by Your Power.  
*wa fi Qudrati-ka mutahayyirāt*  
 I therefore beseech You, O Allāh,  
*fa-as'alu-ka yā Allāh*  
 by the Power that is bewildering  
*bi'l-Qudrati 'llatī taḥayyara bi-hā*  
 to those in the heavens and on earth,  
*man fi 's-samāwāti wa 'l-arḍ*  
 that You may bless Muḥammad and his family,  
*an tuṣalliya 'alā Muḥammadin wa 'alā āli-hi*  
 and his Companions and his progeny.  
*wa ṣaḥbi-hi wa dhurriyyati-h.*

He said: “If someone has a need, let him recite this supplication [du‘ā’], then let him appeal for what he wishes to receive, for it is one of those supplications that are sure to be answered [ad‘iya mustajāba].” May Allāh be well pleased with him!

Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would often quote these poetic verses:

My heart has blinked at You,  
 that it may see what my eye cannot see,  
 And that You may instill in my inner being  
 the sweetness of begging and yearning.

You wish to put me through some test,  
for You know what is required of me.

I have no interest in anything but You,  
so test me however You may wish!

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Bazzāz has told us: “Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hītī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once fell sick in Razīrān, so Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) came to visit him. Other Shaikhs also gathered there, including Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū, Shaikh Abū Sa‘īd al-Qailawī, and Shaikh Aḥmad al-Jawsaqī aṣ-Ṣarṣarī. Ibn al-Hītī therefore instructed his personal servant, the abovementioned Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Jawsaqī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), to spread the table mat. He duly laid it out, then paused for a while. In front of whom, he wondered, should he first set the bread? Then he crumbled a large amount of bread, and scattered it, so that it reached all sides of the table-mat in one fell swoop, without any one of the guests taking precedence over another.

“Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir said to Ibn al-Hītī: ‘This servant of yours does an excellent job! He has spread the table-mat in fine style.’ Shaikh ‘Alī said: ‘We are your attendants, he and I, O my master!’ Then Shaikh ‘Alī instructed Abu'l-Ḥasan to enter the regular service of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Abu'l-Ḥasan burst into tears, so Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir said: ‘Abu 'l-Ḥasan loves no other breast, except the one from which he first sucked milk.’ He then commanded him to remain in the service of his own Shaikh. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!”

It was Shaikh Mas‘ūd al-Ḥārithī who said: “I once set out to visit Shaikh al-Jawsaqī, together with Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Abi 'l-Ḥasan, al-‘Imrān al-Barīdī, and ad-Dārānī. As we were passing by the River Tigris, where it flows near al-Jawsaq, we caught sight of an ugly-looking individual at the water’s edge. He was extremely filthy, and he was shackled with fetters and chains. He called to us for help, so we scrambled to assist him. Then he said to us: ‘When you enter the presence of Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan, petition him for my release, for it was he who imprisoned me here, and bound me in chains.’

“As soon as we entered the Shaikh’s presence, and were on the point of asking him about this matter, he said to us: ‘That is a devil [*shaiṭān*]. Do not petition me on his behalf, for [if he is released] he

will come to the spiritual paupers [*fuqarā'*], who have secluded themselves here with us, and try to confuse them. Whenever he attempted to cause some disruption in their spiritual states, I would forbid him and threaten him, and he would solemnly promise never to do it again. He kept repeating that same pattern, however, so we so made him a prisoner, and did with him what you saw.”

It was Yaḥyā ibn Maḥfūz ad-Dabīqī who said: “I passed by al-Jawsaq one year, at the time of the sultry midday heat, and I saw the Shaikh in an empty hollow [*baṭḥā'*], in which no one else was present. He was swaying in ecstasy [*mutawājid*] to right and left, as he recited these poetic verses:

My separation has been separated by a separation,  
so I have separated from the separation of my separation,  
and I have wandered in every desert,  
enraptured by my consolation.

“Then, after weeping for a very long time, he went on to recite:

My spirit has been reconciled to You entirely;  
if its destruction is for Your sake, it is unperturbed.  
It will weep to You with all of it, in all of it,  
until it is said to have expired from weeping.

“Then he uttered a tremendous cry, and fell down in a faint. As soon as he regained consciousness, he recited:

I honor You too much to complain of the love You inspire.  
I honor You too much to let the fingers point at You,  
and to turn my gaze deliberately toward anyone but You,  
as if I were coming back to You against my will!

“Then his face lit up with joy and happiness. There were two date palms at that spot, one of them bearing fruit, and the other desiccated. The fruitful tree called out to him: ‘By Allāh, eat from me!’ So he stretched out his hand, and took some dates to eat. Then the desiccated tree called out to him: ‘By Allāh, why have you not performed your ablution [*wuḍū'*] here beside me?’ Then a fountain gushed forth from beneath it, so he performed his ablution, and drank some water. The date palm turned green, and immediately bore fruit. Then that fountain dried up. The Shaikh then moved away, saying: ‘O my Master, when You speak to someone, everything speaks to him!’

“Whenever I passed by that place, from that time on, I would burst into tears. I would eat some fruit from that date palm, while invoking the Shaikh’s blessing, and its fruit was among the most delicious of all the fruits of ‘Irāq, due to his blessed grace. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in al-Jawsaq, a small town by a river and a mountain in ‘Irāq, and there he dwelt until he died, as a very old man. He was buried there, and his tomb is a prominent local site, to which visits are frequently paid. It is reported that his death occurred before that of Shaikh Makārim an-Nahr-Khālīṣī.<sup>206</sup> He was given the nickname “Abū ‘Urājā [Father of a Hyena],” because he walked with a limp [‘*araj*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake, on account of his grace and his noble nature!



<sup>206</sup> See p. 500 below.

## 19. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī

**A**s for that exemplary guide, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī al-Asadī, he was one of the most outstanding Shaikhs. He had much to report concerning the hidden mysteries. Whenever he predicted something, it would invariably come to pass, just as he had predicted it, and in the manner he had described, even if it did not happen until forty years later.

He was highly effective in practical disposition [*taṣrīf*]. A man once came to him and said: “O my master, I have date palms that have not borne fruit for eleven years, and cows that have not produced calves for three years.” The Shaikh made a supplication on his behalf, and the date palms bore fruit that same year, while the cows produced calves that very same month. That farmer soon became one of the most prosperous of all the farmers in the country.

A certain person once told the Shaikh: “Your pupil, so-and-so, is saying that he has been given the same talents that you have been given.” The Shaikh replied: “The One who has given me certain talents, has also given him certain talents, but He has not given him the same talents as those He has given me.” Then he said: “I am going to shoot an arrow at him.” He lowered his head in silence, then he said: “I have shot the arrow, and he has intercepted it. I am now about to shoot another one at him.”

He lowered his head in silence, then he said: “I have shot the second arrow, and he has intercepted it. I am now about to shoot a third one at him. If he intercepts it, we shall know that what he has been given is the same as what I have been given.” He lowered his head in silence for a while, then he said: “He has died.” They hurried over to his house, where they found him dead.

The Shaikh would constantly direct the seeker’s progress, stage by stage, right up to the point where he could say to him: “Tomorrow

you will obtain what you are seeking.” Then, when his pupil had finally arrived at the station of direct contact [*wuṣūl*], he would say to him: “There you are, with your Lord!”

He once exclaimed: “Glory be to the One who is glorified by the wild animals in the desert wastes!” Wild animals immediately appeared in front of him, in vast numbers, filling the basin-shaped valley. They were all chanting in their own peculiar languages, and the lions were mingling freely with the rabbits and the gazelles. Some of them came and snuggled against his feet.

Then he exclaimed: “Glory be to the One who is glorified by the birds in their nests!” Many birds, of every species, immediately appeared in the air above his head, filling all the space in the atmosphere. They were all intoning their various melodies, as they drew closer and closer to him, until they alighted on his head.

Then he exclaimed: “Glory be to the One who is glorified by the stormy winds!” Various winds at once began to blow, and they were the most gentle breezes that anyone had ever felt.

Then he exclaimed: “Glory be to the One who is glorified by the towering mountains!” The nearby mountain immediately shook and trembled, and rocks came tumbling down from it.

One Friday, the Shaikh set out to perform the congregational prayer [*ṣalāt al-jum‘a*]. He placed his foot in the stirrup, in order to mount his mule, but then he withdrew his foot, and stood on the ground for a while. Then he mounted the mule. When asked about this, he explained: “My master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was about to mount his mule, at that very moment in Baghdād, and I did not wish to take precedence over him.”

It was the noble Shaikh Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar, the son of Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī, who said:

“My father went out one day, intending to embark on a journey. He placed his foot in the stirrup, but then he withdrew it, and came back inside the house. I asked him about that, so he explained: ‘O my dear son, I could find no spot, anywhere on the earth, that was wide enough for my feet to stand on.’ From then until he died, he never left Ṭafsūnj. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān aṭ-Ṭafsūnjī was one of the mainstays [*awtād*]. It was he who said:

“Among the saints [*awliyā*], I am like the Numidian crane [*kurkī*] among the birds, for it is the one with the longest neck. If a pupil of mine has a heavy bundle on his neck, he can always shift it onto me!” As soon as he had spoken these words, Shaikh Abu ’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Ḥusainī—a man endowed with a splendid spiritual state—took off a dervish cloak [*dalq*] he was wearing, and said to him: “Allow me to have a wrestling match with you!”

Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān held his tongue for a while, then he said to his companions: “As far as I can see, not a single hair on his body is devoid of the providence [*ināya*] of Allāh (Exalted is He).” He told Shaikh Abu ’l-Ḥasan to put his dervish cloak back on, but he said: “I never go back into something I have left behind.” Shaikh Abu’l-Ḥasan then turned toward the garden, and called to his wife by her name: “O Fāṭima, bring me something to wear!” She heard him, for she was in the village, at a point adjacent to the garden. She met him in the street, and handed him the clothes he needed.

When Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān asked him: “Who is your Shaikh?” he replied: “My Shaikh is Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).” “I have never heard any mention of him,” said Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, “except here on the earth. I have spent forty years on the steps of the doorway of the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He), yet I have never seen him there in all that time, neither going in nor coming out.”

Then he said to a group of his companions: “You must travel to Baghdād. Go to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and say to him: ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān salutes you with the greeting of peace. He wishes to tell you that he has spent forty years on the steps of the doorway of the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He), yet he has never seen you there, neither going in nor coming out.’”

At that very moment, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was saying to ‘Abbād al-Bawwāb [the Janitor], Muẓaffar al-Jammāl [the Camel Driver], ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Khuraimī, and ‘Uthmān aṣ-Ṣirāfinī: “Get ready to make the journey to Ṭafsūnj. On your way there, you will encounter a group of Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān’s companions, whom he has sent to tell me such-and-such and such-and-such. As soon as you meet them, you must turn them around, and accompany them to Ṭafsūnj.

Then, when you come to Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, you must say to him: "‘Abd al-Qādir salutes you with the greeting of peace. He says: "You are on the steps, and he who is on the steps cannot see someone who is in the Presence [*Ḥaḍra*]. Nor can he who is in the Presence see someone who is in the anteroom. I go in and come out by the secret door of the innermost being [*sirr*], so that you do not see me.

"Let me give you a few clues: When a certain robe of honor [*khil'a*] was handed out to you, at such-and-such a time, it was by my hand that it came out to you. That was the robe of honor of contentment [*riḍā*]. When a certain token of ennoblement [*tashrīf*] came out to you, on such-and-such a night, it was by my hand that it emerged. That was the ennobling token of triumphant success [*fath*]. On another occasion, the robe of honor of sainthood [*wilāya*] was conferred upon you, while you were on the steps, in the presence of twelve thousand saints of Allāh (Exalted is He). That was a green mantle [*farajīyya*], embroidered with the Sūra of Sincere Devotion [*Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*],<sup>207</sup> and it was also conferred by my hand."

When they had covered one half of the road, they encountered the companions of Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, so they duly turned them around, and traveled with them to their Shaikh. They conveyed to him the message of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and he said: "Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir has told the truth. He is the Sultān of this day and age, and the master of effective disposition at this time." May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

The personal name of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was originally Ḥabīb, but he adopted the name 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, after a voice had addressed him in his innermost being [*sirr*] saying: "Welcome, O 'Abd ar-Raḥmān!"

Ṭafsūnj is a small town in the land of 'Irāq. It was there that he died, as a very old man. His tomb is a prominent local site, and visits are frequently paid to it. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!

When his death was near at hand, his son said to him: "Bequeath me some good advice," so he said: "I advise you to observe the honor due to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, to stand ready to obey his command, and to serve him with loyal commitment." As soon as he had died, his son came to Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, who accorded him an

<sup>207</sup> See note 85 on p. 148 above.

honorable reception, invested him with a tattered cloak [*khirqa*], and married him to his daughter.

Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān’s son used to dress in the academic garb of the scholars [*‘ulāmā’*]. One day, while he was sitting in the schoolhouse of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, a crazy pauper [*faqīr muwallah*] came and sat beside him. He started twisting his sleeves this way and that, saying: “These are not the sleeves of Shaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān’s son! These are the sleeves of Ibn Hubaira!” (He was referring to the Grand Vizier of that name.) The Shaikh’s son promptly got up and went into his private apartment, where he removed his academic attire, and clothed himself in dusty rags. Dressed like that, he departed from Baghdād.

After some time had gone by, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir said to two men, from among his companions: “You must travel to ‘Abbādān, for that is where you will find him, and bring him here to me!” The two set out at once, and brought him to the Shaikh, who gave him his own gown to wear, and reunited him with his wife (may Allāh be well pleased with her).



## 20. Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū

That exemplary guide, Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū (may Allāh be well pleased with him), was one of the most outstanding of all the Shaikhs in ‘Irāq. He was endowed with remarkable spiritual states and charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]. As we have previously mentioned,<sup>208</sup> he was one of the four who were able to heal the blind-from-birth and the leper, and to restore the dead to life, by the leave of Allāh (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He).

Our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir held him in high esteem, and frequently extolled his merit. It was he who used to say: “All of the Shaikhs have been given talents in precisely measured quantities [*bi’l-kail*], except Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū, for in his case they have been bestowed at random and in bulk [*juzāfan*].”

One day, when Shaikh Baqā was speaking on the subject of charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], his audience included a man endowed with remarkable spiritual states and penetrating insight. That man said: “In this present time of ours, there is someone who matches the following description: When he draws water from the well, his bucket comes up full of gold. Wherever he directs his gaze, his eyes alight on gold. Whenever he stands ready to perform the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], he sees the Ka‘ba right in front of him.”

The man was actually describing his own condition. Shaikh Baqā looked at him, then lowered his head in silence, and the man lost all his spiritual states. When he came to the Shaikh, begging for forgiveness, he said to him: “What happened will not be repeated.”

On one occasion, three experts in Islāmic jurisprudence [*fuqahā’*] came to visit him. They performed the late evening prayer [*ishā’*] behind him, but he did not pronounce the Qur’ānic recitation [*qirā’a*] to the satisfaction of those legal experts, so they formed a very bad opinion of him. They spent the night in his convent

<sup>208</sup> See p. 154 above.

[*zāwiya*], and all three of them came to be in a state of major ritual impurity [due to the discharge of semen]. They therefore went down to the stream, which flowed by the door of the convent [*zāwiya*], in order to perform their total ablutions. While they were bathing, an enormous lion came along, and sprawled itself out to rest on their pile of clothes. It was a bitterly cold night, so their destruction seemed inevitable.

Just then, however, the Shaikh emerged from his convent [*zāwiya*]. The lion came and snuggled against his feet, so he started whipping it with his sleeves. "Why are you causing trouble for our guests," he said, "even if they do think badly of us?" The lion slunk away, and the legal experts came up to the Shaikh, begging his forgiveness. "You have improved your tongues," he told them, "and we have improved our hearts."

A fire once broke out in his village, and it quickly spread, causing panic in the surrounding areas. The Shaikh went and stood between the fire and the part it had not yet reached. "This is as far as you go, O blessed one," he cried, and it immediately died down.

Shaikh Baqā (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in Anbūs, one of the villages of Nahr al-Malik [the King's River], and it was there that he died, when he was more than eighty years of age. His tomb is a prominent site in that locality, and visits are frequently paid to it. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, and may He be well pleased with him!



## 21. Shaikh Abū Saʿīd ʿAlī al-Qailawī (d. ca. A.H. 557)

As for that exemplary guide, the enlightened and noble Shaikh Abū Saʿīd (or, as some say, Abū Saʿd) ʿAlī al-Qailawī<sup>209</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] and remarkable spiritual states. As we have previously mentioned,<sup>210</sup> he was one of the four righteous healers. He never made a supplication without receiving an answer. Whenever he visited the sick, the invalid was sure to be restored to health, if he had not yet reached his appointed term. Whenever he cast the eye of contentment [*riḍā*] upon the heart of desolation, it was sure to thrive and prosper, and if he scowled at it, the reverse would be the outcome.

He was one of those Islāmic jurists [*fuqahāʾ*] who are acknowledged for their expertise, and who are qualified to issue formal legal opinions [*muftīn*]. He was also one of the mainstays [*awtād*] of this [spiritual] business. More than a few of the most prominent figures received their education from him, including all the following:

- Shaikh Abu ʿl-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Qurashī
- Abū ʿAbdiʾllāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Madyanī
- Khalifa ibn Mūsā
- Mubārak ibn ʿAlī al-Jīlī
- Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Qaidī.

He was once invited to a lavish feast, at which all sorts of dishes were provided. He forbade the people with him to eat any of it, and

<sup>209</sup> At this point in the original text, the author spells out the first two syllables of <Qailawī> letter by letter, using the appropriate Arabic terminology: *bi-faṭḥ al-qāf wa sukūn al-yāʾ wa faṭḥ al-lām*.

<sup>210</sup> See p. 154 above.

he consumed it all himself. Then, as soon as he had stepped outside, he said: "It is unlawful food [*ḥarām*]." He took a deep breath, and smoke belched from his mouth, like an enormous column. Then came a similar column of fire. "There goes the food I ate," said he.

He once gave the call to prayer [*adhān*] on a rock outside Qailuwiyya. At the moment when he proclaimed: "Allāh is Supremely Great [*Allāhu Akbar*]," the rock split into five chunks, and the earth shook in awe of his *takbīr* [declaration of Allāh's Supreme Greatness].

On another occasion, one of his companions followed him to the toilet, carrying a jug of water for his use. He tripped and fell, and the jug broke. Then the Shaikh came and picked it up, and lo and behold, it was all in one piece, and full of water, just as it had been before.

The Shaikhs of 'Irāq, 'Umar al-Bazāzī, Abu 's-Sa'ūd al-Mudallil, and an-Nāṣiri Qā'id al-Awānī, have related that a meeting once took place between Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, Ibn Baṭū, al-Qailawī and Ibn al-Hitī, at the house by the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Azaj*]. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir said to Ibn al-Hitī: "Give us a speech!" "How can I give a speech in your presence?" replied Ibn al-Hitī, so he said to Shaikh Baqā [ibn Baṭū]: "Give us a speech!" "How can I give a speech in your presence?" replied Shaikh Baqā, so he said to Shaikh al-Qailawī: "Give us a speech!"

Shaikh al-Qailawī responded by giving a very brief speech, then, after a moment of silence, he said: "I spoke in obedience to your command, and I fell silent in your honor." Then Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir spoke about the sciences of the realities [*'ulūm al-ḥaqā'iq*], in a speech that was greatly admired by his audience. Then Shaikh al-Qailawī asked his permission to say a few words. Permission was granted, so he recited these poetic verses:

There appeared to him, once the scars of passion had mended,  
a lightning flash that made the dark night shine with its brilliance.

It appeared like the hem of a gown, and beneath it  
the peaks were hard to scale, its pillars insurmountable.

It appeared to reveal how it shone, but he could not  
look at it, and his sorrows reflected it back.

So the fire was more than his ribs could contain,  
and no water was forthcoming from his eyelids.

Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir then rose above the ground into the air, and started whirling around. He rose higher and higher in the air, until he went out through the skylight of the building. The others then went over to his schoolhouse, and they found him already there. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

One day, while Shaikh ʿAlī al-Qailawī was delivering a public lecture, he was presented with two sealed baskets, carried in by a group of people. He interrupted his lecture, and said to the carriers: “You are members of the Rāfiḍa sect.<sup>211</sup> You have come to test me with the contents of these two baskets.” Then he stepped down from the lectern and opened one of them. It contained a young boy, a paralytic. “Get up!” he said to him, and the boy stood up and ran. Then he opened the other basket, which contained a healthy young boy. “Sit still!” he told him, and the boy became paralyzed. The heretics repented at the Shaikh’s hand. They swore by Allāh that no one else could have known what they were up to, apart from Allāh (Exalted is He).<sup>212</sup>

Shaikh ʿAlī al-Qailawī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) died in his own village of Qailuwiyya, one of the villages of Nahr Malik [the King’s River], around the year [A.H.] 557. He was buried there, and visits are frequently paid to his tomb, which is a prominent local site.

He was a nobleman [*sharīf*], a direct descendant of al-Ḥusain ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. May Allāh be well pleased with them!

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to dress in the academic gown and shawl worn by religious scholars [*ʿulamāʾ*], and he used to ride on mules. He was graceful in his attributes of character, splendid in his virtues, and noble in his ethical and moral qualities. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

The place-name Qailuwiyya is formed on the same pattern as Ḥamduwiyya.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>211</sup> Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has provided an extensive treatment of the Rāfiḍa sect, and its many branches, in the work cited in note 3 on p. 28 above. (See Vol. 1, pp. 411–21, of the Al-Baz edition.)

<sup>212</sup> For a similar exploit, attributed to Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), see p. 125 above.

<sup>213</sup> In the original text, the author uses the appropriate Arabic terminology to specify the correct pronunciation of <Qailuwiyya>: *bi-ḍamm al-lām wa kasr al-wāw ʿalā waḥḍ Ḥamduwiyya*.

After mentioning Shaikh Abū Sa‘īd al-Qailawī, in his book entitled *Khulāṣat al-Mafākhīr fī Manāqib ash-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir* [Summary of Glorious Qualities, Concerning the Charismatic Exploits of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir], the highly erudite al-Yāfi‘ī spells out the surname “Qailawī” [using the appropriate Arabic terminology].<sup>214</sup>

When the Shaikh’s death was at hand, his son, Abu ‘l-Khair Sa‘īd, said to him: “Bequeath me some good advice!” He replied: “I advise you to observe the honor due to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.” Shaikh Muḥammad al-Madyanī then said to him: “O my master, tell me about the spiritual state of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.” To this he replied: “He is the sweet basil [*raiḥāna*] of the innermost beings of the saints [*awliyā’*]. Of all the people of the earth, he is the nearest and dearest to Allāh in this day and age.” May Allāh be well pleased with them!



<sup>214</sup> *bi-faṭḥ al-qāf wa sukūn al-yā’ al-muthannāh min taḥt wa faṭḥ al-lām.*

## 22. Shaikh Maṭīr al-Bādhirānī

**T**hat exemplary guide, Shaikh Maṭīr al-Bādhirānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), was a man of splendid worth, the Shaikh of ‘Irāq, endowed with charismatic [*karāmāt*] and remarkable spiritual states.

It was Shaikh Aḥmad al-Harawī who said: “Whenever the gaze of Shaikh Maṭīr fell upon a disobedient sinner, he was sure to become worshipfully obedient. If it fell upon someone forgetful, he was sure to become vigilantly alert. Whenever a Jew or a Christian spent time in his presence, he was sure to embrace Islām. Whenever he passed by a plot of arid land, it was sure to produce vegetation. Whenever he offered a supplication, to invoke a blessing, for instance, the response would always be apparent through visible signs.

“When I went to visit him, on one occasion, I was accompanied by five individuals. The Shaikh welcomed us, and presented us with a quantity of milk amounting to three *raṭl*.<sup>215</sup> We drank as much of it as we needed to quench our thirst. Then seven other people came and quenched their thirst. Then ten more came and quenched their thirst. By Allāh, there was more milk left, when they had all finished drinking, than had been there at the start!”

“During the lifetime of his own Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifīn, Shaikh Maṭīr (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once had a dream, in which he saw a huge tree. It had many branches, and it was situated in the neighborhood of Bādirāy. Early the next morning, he went to work in the service of Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifīn, who said to him: ‘O Shaikh Maṭīr, I am that tree, the one you saw last night in your dream. You must go to Bādirāy, and make your home there.’

“Bādirāy is a village in the coastal provinces of ‘Irāq. Shaikh Maṭīr settled there, and it was there that his death occurred, prior to the death of Shaikh Baqā ibn Baṭū.<sup>216</sup> His own Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifīn

<sup>215</sup> See note 202 on p. 425 above.

<sup>216</sup> See p. 439 above.

commended him highly, and he used to say of him: ‘Shaikh Maṭir is the heir to my spiritual state and my worldly estate [*wārith ḥālī wa mālī*].’ He also gave him the honorific title ‘Firmly Established Mountain [*al-Jabal ar-Rāsikh*].’”

His son, Abu ‘l-Khair Karūm, has told us: “When my father’s death was at hand, I said to him: ‘Advise me whom I should follow as my guide, after you are gone.’ He said: ‘Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir.’ Then I repeated my question to him, and he said: ‘O my dear son, in Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s day and age, he will be the only one to follow as a guide!’ He went on to extol his merit at great length.” May Allāh be well pleased with them!



## 23. Shaikh Mājīd al-Kurḍī (d. A.H. 564)

**T**hat exemplary guide, Shaikh Mājīd al-Kurḍī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), was one of the inhabitants of Qawsān, a provincial town in ‘Irāq. He was endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] and supernatural spiritual states [*aḥwāl khāriqa*]. He had an exceptional clarity of speech, as demonstrated by his saying: “Silence is a trouble-free act of worship [*aṣ-ṣamt ‘ibāda min ḡhair ‘anā’*].”

A man once came to him and said: “I have resolved to perform the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*] on the basis of strict detachment [*tajrīd*].” The Shaikh gave him his small, long-handled copper pot [*rakwa*], and said: “This will provide you with water, if you need to perform the ritual ablution [*wuḍū’*], and with milk, if you get thirsty. It will also supply you with porridge [*sawīq*], in case you get hungry.” The man expressed his gratitude, and the Shaikh’s pot did indeed supply his needs, on the way to Mecca and on the journey back to his hometown.

Shaikh Mājīd al-Kurḍī was one of the devoted followers of Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifīn Abu’-l-Wafā’<sup>217</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

His son Sulaimān has told us: “I had been with my father in his chamber of retreat [*khalwa*], and I knew that there was nothing in it to eat. Then twenty persons came to visit him, so he said to me: ‘Go into my chamber, and fetch us some food!’ I could not bring myself to contradict him, so I went into his chamber, and lo and behold, it contained all sorts of food! I duly presented it to the guests, and not a single scrap was left behind. Then a party of fifteen men arrived, and then another group of thirty. He gave me the same instruction, each time this happened, and I found the necessary food in his chamber.

<sup>217</sup> See p. 351 above.

“Then my father stared at his two personal servants, and they fainted on the spot. We carried them to their houses, like logs of wood, and they stayed there for the next six months. Then they entered the Shaikh’s presence and asked for forgiveness. They said: ‘We thought this must be some kind of witchcraft, until we were disabused of that notion!’”

Sulaimān has also told us: “My father said to me one day: ‘O Sulaimān, you must go to this mountain nearby. There you will find three travelers, men of the Unseen [*Ghaib*]. You must tell them: ‘My father salutes you with the greeting of peace, and he says: “You may have whatever you desire.”’ I duly went and conveyed to them what my father had said, and one of them said to me: ‘A pomegranate.’ Another said: ‘An apple,’ and the third said: ‘Some grapes.’

“I went back to my father, and reported this to him, so he said: ‘You must go to such-and-such a tree, and pick from it what they want.’ When I came to that tree, I found it laden with all those fruits, although I knew that it had been desiccated quite recently. I brought them to my father, and he told me to take them to the travelers.

“I did as he told me, and two of them ate, while the recipient of the apple said: ‘I prefer to let you keep it!’ Then they flew away, and he tried to join them in their flight, but he could not do so. Then my father prayed for forgiveness on his behalf, ate some of the apple, and gave him the rest to eat. He slapped him between his shoulders, and he flew off to join the other travelers.”

Our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir would often extol the merit of Shaikh Mājid al-Kurdī (may Allāh be well pleased with them both).

Shaikh Mājid died in the month of Jumādā ’l-Ūlā, in the year [A.H.] 564. I have not been able to ascertain his date of birth. May Allāh be well pleased with him!



## 24. Shaikh Abū Madyan Shu‘aib al-Maghribī

**T**hat exemplary guide, Shaikh Abū Madyan Shu‘aib al-Maghribī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), was one of the most notable Shaikhs of the West [*Maghrib*], one of the foremost of those who are brought near [to the Lord], one of the greatest of those who know by direct experience [*‘ārifīn*], and one of the leaders of those who specialize in the realities [*muḥaqqiqīn*]. He was endowed with supernatural charismatic talents [*karāmāt khāriqāt*], remarkable deeds, lofty spiritual stations, and exalted aspirations. He was also endowed with penetrating insight and brilliantly clear disclosure.

Shaikh Abū Madyan held a preeminent position in the degrees of nearness, and he took precedence in the ranks of holiness. His footing was firmly established in effectiveness, and the span of his arm was far-reaching in the sphere of disposition. He was well versed in the principles of sainthood [*wilāya*], and great was his strength in the spiritual states of the ultimate stage of development.

He was one of the mainstays [*awtād*] of the West [*Maghrib*], one of the pillars of this [spiritual] business, one of the finest of the skillful leaders, and one of the chieftains of those who specialize in the realities [*muḥaqqiqīn*]. He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) presents in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He granted him freedom of disposal in the created universe [*‘ālam*], established him in control of the spiritual states, and put him in possession of the mysteries. At his hands, He manifested wondrous marvels. He caused him to utter words of wisdom on all kinds of subjects. He instilled complete acceptance of him, combined with profound respect, in the hearts of His creatures.

Shaikh Abū Madyan received a constant stream of visitors, and his fame spread to the east and to the west. He was one of those whom

Allāh (Exalted is He) has enabled to combine the two sciences, the science of the Sacred Law [*Sharīʿa*] and the science of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*]. He issued formal opinions on questions of Islāmic law, in the lands of the West, according to the doctrine [*madhhab*] of Imām Mālik ibn Anas<sup>218</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He became the central point of reference for seekers of knowledge, who studied under him and derived great benefit from his lectures. More than a few of the Shaikhs of the West received their education in his fellowship, including the following:

- Shaikh ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ḥajūn al-Maghribī
- Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurashī
- Shaikh ʿAbduʿllāh al-Qashtānī al-Fāsī
- Shaikh al-Qudwa Ṣāliḥ az-Zakālī.

Many of the people of the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīq*] became his students. Of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, a vast number propagated his teaching, and a great host of the righteous became affiliated to him. The scholars and Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) were unanimous in declaring him worthy of reverence and honor. They acknowledged his special merit, and frequently turned to him for advice.

He was handsome and graceful, modest to the point of humility, abstinent and cautiously restrained, and firmly committed to the Truth. He combined the most noble dispositions, the most honorable characteristics, and the finest attributes, with strict observance of the duties of the Sacred Law [*Sharʿ*]. He had an exquisite way of speaking, in the language of the Realities [*Ḥaqāʿiq*], and he is famous for his blessed prayers of supplication [*adʿiya mubāraka*]. The following is one of his prayers of supplication [*adʿiya*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

O Allāh, all knowledge is with You,  
*Allāhumma inna ʿl-ʿilma ʿinda-ka*

though it is veiled from me.  
*wa huwa mahjūbun ʿan-nī*

I do not know how to choose what is best for myself,  
*wa lā aʿlamu amran fa-akhtāra-hu li-nafsi*

<sup>218</sup> See note 201 on p. 422 above.

so I have entrusted my business to You,  
*fa-qad fawwadtu ilai-ka amrī*

and pinned my hope on You, in my need and my poverty.  
*wa rajawtu-ka li-fāqatī wa faqrī*

Direct me therefore, O Allāh,  
*fa-arshid-nī Allāhumma*

to those affairs that are dearest to You,  
*ilā aḥabbi 'l-umūri ilai-ka*

and that are most pleasing to You,  
*wa arḍā-hā 'inda-ka*

and of which the outcome is most praiseworthy in Your sight,  
*wa aḥmadi-hā 'āqibatan 'inda-ka*

for You do whatever You will with Your Power.  
*fa-inna-ka taf'alu mā tashā'u bi-Qudrati-ka*

You are indeed Capable of all things.  
*inna-ka 'alā kulli shai'in Qadīr.*

May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake! Here is a sample of his poetry:

O You who are so Exalted that You see  
all that is in the invisible domains  
and all that is beneath the earth,  
even when the darkness of night is descending.

You are the Helper for those whose paths have narrowed.  
You are the Guide for those whom deceptions have bewildered.

We have turned toward You in confident expectation,  
for everyone calls on You when anxious and imploring.

If You forgive, You are Gracious and Nobly Generous,  
and if you chastise, You are the Equitable Judge.

It was Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Qanāwī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: "I once heard our Shaikh Abū Madyan (may Allāh be well pleased with him) say:

"My Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) made me stand before Him, and He said to me: "O Shu'aib, I have multiplied this [blessing] for you, and I have forgiven you this [sin]. Congratulations to anyone who sees you, or sees someone who has seen you!"

Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥmān also said: "I once heard him say: 'My Lord (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He) has promised me much goodness, in each and every one of my companions, and everyone who loves me.'

“In the course of the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], he once recited:

And in it their thirst is quenched

*wa yusqawna fī-hā*

with a cup the mixture of which is ginger.

*ka'san kāna mizāju-hā zanjabīlā. (76:17)*

“His lips became moist, and as soon as he had finished the prayer, he said: ‘When I recited those verses [*āyāt*], I was given to drink from the [heavenly] cup.’

“On another occasion, he recited:

Surely the righteous will be in bliss,

*inna 'l-abrāra la-fī na'im:*

And the wicked will be in a fiery furnace,

*wa inna 'l-fujjāra la-fī jahīm. (82:13,14)*

“He said afterwards: ‘I witnessed their respective situations!’”

It was Shaikh Ṣāliḥ az-Zakālī who said: “War broke out between the Muslims and the Franks [*Fīranj*], so the Shaikh went out with his companions into the desert. He had his sword with him, and I was by his side. He sat down on a sandhill, and pigs appeared in front of him, filling the landscape. At that moment, the Franks had just gained the upper hand over the Muslims. The Shaikh unsheathed his sword, and ran until he was in the midst of the pigs. He uttered a loud shout, and the pigs raised their heads. He killed a large number of them, and the rest turned and fled. When we asked him to explain what he had done, he said: ‘These are the Franks, and Allāh (Exalted is He) has now forsaken them.’

“We recorded the time when this had happened, then the news came that the Franks had been defeated at the very time we had recorded. When the Muslim warriors [*mujāhidūn*] arrived, they prostrated themselves at the Shaikh’s feet, and kissed them. They swore, by Allāh, that he had been with them between the opposing ranks, and that, but for him, they would have perished. They swore that he (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had wielded his sword against the leading horseman of the Franks, felling him and his horse to the ground. They swore that he had wreaked a terrible massacre upon them, that the Franks had turned in full retreat, and that, after the battle was over, they had seen no sign of him. Between the Shaikh

and the place where the battle took place, the distance was greater than that of a month-long journey. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

“Shaikh Abū Madyan (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was once taken prisoner by the Franks, who carried him off to their ship. It was an enormous ship, and it held a troop of Muslim prisoners between its decks. As soon as the Shaikh had stepped on board, they unfurled its sails and attempted to move out to sea. The wind was fair, but the ship would not take them anywhere, neither to starboard nor to port. They realized the cause of their predicament, so they said to him: ‘Away you go!’ ‘Only if I take my fellow Muslims with me,’ said he, so they let them all go. Then the ship sailed away with the Franks.

“One day, while the Shaikh was performing his ritual ablution [*wuḍūʿ*] on the beach, his signet ring fell into the water. ‘O my Lord,’ he exclaimed, ‘I want my signet ring back!’ A fish immediately popped up, with the ring in its mouth, so he recovered it.

“On another occasion, he happened to drop his flask of broth. The flask broke into pieces, and the broth spilled over the ground, so he stood there and said: ‘O my Lord, I want my flask with the broth inside it!’ The flask immediately returned to its intact condition, with the broth inside it.”

Shaikh Abū Madyan (may Allāh be well pleased with him) spent his life in the regions of the West [*Maghrib*]. The Commander of the Believers [*Amīr al-Muʾminīn*] sought him out, in order to obtain his blessing. When he reached Tlemcen [*Tilimsān*],<sup>219</sup> the Shaikh said: ‘What business have we with the Sultān? Tonight we are visiting our spiritual brothers [*ikhwān*].’ Then he dismounted from his riding animal, turned toward the *Qibla* [direction of the Kaʿba in Mecca], and proclaimed the testimony of faith [*shahāda*]. Then he said: ‘Here I come, hastening to You, my Lord, that You may be well pleased!’ He died (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and was buried in the Cemetery of the Servants [of the Lord] [*Maqābir al-ʿIbād*]. His tomb is a landmark there, to which visits are frequently paid. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!

<sup>219</sup> Tlemcen [*Tilimsān*] is a city in N.W. Algeria.

## 25. Shaikh Abu 'l-Barakāt Ṣakhr

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Abu 'l-Barakāt Ṣakhr ibn Ṣakhr ibn Musāfir al-Umawī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the finest of the Shaikhs of 'Irāq, in the regions of the East, and one of the noblest of those who know by direct experience [*ʿārifīn*]. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], magnificent spiritual states, splendid spiritual stations, and spiritually inspired utterances. He was also endowed with penetrating insight, brilliantly clear disclosure, and exalted worth. He held the highest position in the sessions of nearness. The span of his arm was far-reaching in the spiritual states of the ultimate stage of development [*nihāya*], and his armor was ironclad in the principles of sainthood [*wilāya*].

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) presents in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He put him in possession of the mysteries, established him in control of the spiritual states, and caused words of wisdom to flow upon his tongue. Allāh (Exalted is He) appointed him as an exemplary guide for spiritual travelers [*sālikīn*] and a proof for the truthful [*ṣādiqīn*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

He became a companion of the exemplary Shaikh Sharaf ad-Dīn 'Adī ibn Musāfir<sup>220</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), to join whose fellowship he migrated from his village of Bait Fār, in the Biqā' valley, to Mount al-Hakkār. He succeeded him after his death in Lālīsh. Shaikh 'Adī used to extol his merit and accord him preferential treatment, and he would say of him: "He is indeed Abu 'l-Barakāt [Father of Blessings], really and truly!"

He met more than a few of the Shaikhs of the East (may Allāh be well pleased with them all), and leadership devolved upon him in his

<sup>220</sup> See p. 369 above.

own time, in the training of spiritual seekers in Mount al-Hakkār and the surrounding districts. More than a few of the righteous received their education in his fellowship, as did his son, the splendid and noble Shaikh 'Adī [ibn Abi 'l-Barakāt], of whom we shall have more to say [in the following section]. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

He was noble and generous by nature, graceful by disposition, dignified in his bearing, and modest in his attitude. He treated the devoutly religious with loving affection, and the people of knowledge with honor and respect. He was highly intelligent, and extremely humble. He had an exquisite way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the realities [ḥaqā'iq], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- If someone is intoxicated from drinking the cup of love, he cannot become sober, except through the direct vision of his Beloved. Intoxication [sukr] is a night, the morning of which is direct witnessing [mushāhada], just as truthfulness [ṣidq] is a tree, the fruit of which is spiritual striving [mujāhada].

- The roots of love consist of three things: loyalty [wafā'], proper conduct [adab], and chivalry [murū'a].

- Loyalty [wafā'] is the singular devotion of the heart to its singular devotion [fardāniyya], its steadfastness in its witnessing, and its intimate communion with the light of its sempiternity [azaliyya].

- As for proper conduct [adab], it is respect for the feelings, careful attention to opportune moments, and strict avoidance of the causes of separation.

- As for chivalry [murū'a], it is the practice of remembrance with pure sincerity, in word and deed; keeping secrets from rivals, both outwardly and inwardly; careful attention to opportune moments, in readiness for what is to come; and making amends for missed opportunities.

- If these qualities are present in the servant [of the Lord], he will discover the delight of connection, and fear the agony of separation, and the fire of ardent yearning will glow in his innermost being [sirr].

It was Shaikh Abu 'l-Faṭḥ Naṣr ibn Riḍwān ibn Marwan ad-Dārānī who said: "One day in the season of autumn, I went out with the Shaikh from the convent [zāwiya] to the Mount. He was also

accompanied by a group of spiritual paupers [*fuqarā'*], one of whom said: 'Today we have an appetite for sweet and sour pomegranates.' Before he had finished his sentence, all the various kinds of trees in the valley were laden with pomegranates.

"The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said to us: 'Help yourselves to all the pomegranates you want!' We picked a large quantity of fruit, gathering pomegranates from the apple trees, the pear trees, and the apricot trees. We plucked both sweet and sour from one and the same tree. After we had eaten our fill, we returned [to the convent], then, after a while, we went out again. The Shaikh was not with us this time, and we did not see a single pomegranate on any of those trees. "

Shaikh Abu 'l-Faḥ also said: "Shaikh Naṣru'llāh ibn 'Alī al-Ḥamīdī ash-Shaibānī al-Hakkārī was walking on the side of the Mount, one stormy day, when the Mount began to shake. The wind blew him over, and he fell from the top of the Mount. Shaikh Abu 'l-Barakāt (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was sitting with his face toward the Mount, so he signaled to it with his hand, and it settled down firmly in its place.

"Meanwhile, Shaikh Naṣru'llāh was suspended in the air, between the top of the Mount and the ground below. He was moving neither to right nor left, as if somebody was holding him tight, and preventing him from making any movement. He stayed there for a while, then Shaikh Abu 'l-Barakāt said to the wind: 'O wind, carry him up to the roof of the Mount.' The wind obediently lifted him up, ever so gently, as if a person were carrying him, until it brought him to the roof of the Mount, though his blessed grace. May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

It was Abu 'l-Faḍl Ma'ālī ibn Banhāl at-Tamīmī al-Mawṣilī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said: "I spent seven years in the fellowship of my master, Shaikh Abu 'l-Barakāt. One day, when I was pouring water over his hands, after a meal, he said to me: 'What do you wish for?' To this I replied: 'Offer a prayer of supplication on my behalf, requesting that it be made easy for me to memorize the Glorious Qur'ān.' He said: 'May Allāh make it easy for you. May He assist you in its recitation, and may He bring near to you everything that is now remote.'

"Allāh (Exalted is He) did make it easy for me to memorize the Qur'ān, so that I memorized it completely in only eight months. I had

previously spent three days repeating a single verse [*āya*] in the effort to learn it by heart, and had found it very hard to commit it to memory. Now here I am, reciting it in the watches of the night, and at the ends of the day.<sup>221</sup> Allāh (Exalted is He) has brought near to me everything that used to be remote. Since then, whatever I find difficult becomes simple, and whenever something intimidates me, Allāh (Exalted is He) makes it extremely easy, through the blessing of the Shaikh's supplication."

His son, Shaikh Abu 'l-Mafākhir 'Adī (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), has told us: "My father once noticed a man performing the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], while doing a lot of fidgeting with his hands. He was doing this so much that the prayer would be rendered invalid, so my father told him to stop doing it. Far from desisting, however, he reacted with stubborn defiance, and actually increased his fidgeting, so the Shaikh said to him: 'Either you will restrain yourself from fidgeting, or Allāh (Exalted is He) will restrain your hands.' The man's hands were immediately rendered useless.

"Then he came to the Shaikh, a few days later, weeping and humbly imploring. The Shaikh said to him: 'How can this behavior do you any good? What you are experiencing is the wrath of Allāh (Exalted is He), the arrow of which has pierced you through and through.' The man died there and then. May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!"

Shaikh Abu 'l-Barakāt Ṣakhr made his home in Lālīsh, near Mount al-Hakkār, and he continued to reside there until he died, as a very old man. He was buried next to his paternal uncle, Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir, and their tomb is a prominent site, to which visits are frequently paid. May Allāh be well pleased with them both!

<sup>221</sup> This is an allusion to the verse [*āya*] of the Qur'ān:

And extol the praise of your Lord  
*wa sabbih bi-ḥamdi Rabbi-ka*  
 before the rising of the sun,  
*qabla ṭulū'i 'sh-shamsi*  
 and before its setting,  
*wa qabla ghurūbi-hā*  
 and in the watches of the night,  
*wa min ānā'i 'l-laili*  
 and extol [His praise] at the ends of the day,  
*fa-sabbih wa aṭrāfa 'n-nahāri*  
 so that you may earn His good pleasure.  
*la' alla-ka tardā. (20:130)*

## 26. Shaikh Abu'l-Mafākhir 'Adī ibn Abi'l-Barakāt

**A**s for the noble Shaikh Abu 'l-Mafākhir 'Adī ibn Abi 'l-Barakāt Ṣakhr ibn Ṣakhr ibn Musāfir al-Umawī ash-Shāmī al-Hakkārī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), his surname “ash-Shāmī” points to his Syrian family origin, while “al-Hakkārī” indicates that al-Hakkār [in 'Irāq] was his birthplace and his home.

He was one of the most outstanding of all the distinguished Shaikhs of 'Irāq. He was endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], remarkable spiritual states, splendid spiritual stations, and spiritually inspired utterances. He was also endowed with brilliantly clear disclosure and penetrating insight. His footing was firmly established in effectiveness, and the span of his arm was far-reaching in the sphere of disposition. He was well versed in the principles of sainthood [*wilāya*], and great was his strength in the spiritual states of the ultimate stage of development [*niḥāya*]. He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) presents in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He established him in control of the spiritual states, and caused words of wisdom to flow upon his tongue.

He joined his father's fellowship, and received his education from him. He met more than a few of the Shaikhs of the East (may Allāh be well pleased with them all), and leadership devolved upon him in his own time, in the training of spiritual seekers in Mount al-Hakkār and the surrounding districts. More than a few received their education in his fellowship.

He was noble and generous by nature, graceful by disposition, dignified in his bearing, and modest in his attitude. He treated the devoutly religious with loving affection, and the people of knowledge with honor and respect. He was highly intelligent, and extremely

humble. The scholars and the Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) were unanimous in declaring him worthy of the greatest honor and respect. He received a constant stream of visitors, and his fame spread to the far horizons. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

I have not been able to ascertain the date of his birth, nor that of his death. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



## 27. Shaikh Yūsuf al-Hamadānī (A.H. 440–535)

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusain ibn Wahra al-Hamadānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the pillars of Islām. Upon him devolved the ultimate authority for the training of spiritual seekers in Khurāsān. His Ṣūfī center [*khānaqāh*] became a gathering place for a large community of the religious scholars [*‘ulamā’*], the experts in Islāmic jurisprudence [*fuqahā’*], and the righteous [*ṣulahā’*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them all). They derived great benefit from him, and from his speech, and they received their education in his fellowship.

From his early childhood till the time of his death, Shaikh Yūsuf was always on the straight path, devoted to worshipful service [*‘ibāda*], pious seclusion [*khalwa*], and spiritual exercise for the training of the lower self [*riyādat an-nafs*]. He joined the fellowship of a company of the ascetics [*zuhhād*], and studied Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] under several of the scholars of the age.

His own students included many of the leading figures of Khurāsān, where the Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them) held him in high esteem. He had a fine way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*].

It was Shaikh ‘Alī al-Jawnī who said: “I was present in the audience of Shaikh Yūsuf al-Hamadānī, one day, at his session of wise counsel, while he was speaking to the people. Two jurists [*faqihān*] were also present, and they said to him: ‘Be silent, for you are an heretical innovator [*mubtadi’*]!’ The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) responded by saying to them: ‘Be silent! May the two of you not go on living!’ They both died on the spot.”

In his *Ta'rikh* [History], Ibn Khallikān informs us that Shaikh Yūsuf held a session, one day, to deliver wise counsel, and the public gathered to hear him. One of those present was a jurist [*faqīh*], known as Ibn as-Saqqā', who stood up, hurled insults at the Shaikh, and asked him about a certain technical question. Imām Yūsuf said to him: 'Sit down, for in your speech I detect the aroma of unbelief [*kufr*]. Perhaps you will die in something other than the religion of Islām.'

"The ambassador of the Byzantine Emperor [*Malik ar-Rūm*] came to visit the Caliph [*Khalīfa*], and Ibn as-Saqqā' accompanied the ambassador on his return to Constantinople. There he converted to Christianity, and died as a Christian [*Naṣrānī*]. Ibn as-Saqqā' had been a reciter of the Qur'ān, highly praised for the quality of his recitation. Someone who saw him in Constantinople is reported as having said: 'I saw him as a sick man, lying collapsed on a bench. He had a fan in his hand, with which he was chasing the flies from his face. I said to him: 'Is the Qur'ān still surviving in your memory?' He said: 'I can remember nothing of it, except one verse [*āya*], and that is:

Maybe those who disbelieve wish ardently  
*rubba-mā yawaddu 'lādhihīna kafarū*  
 that they were Muslims.  
*law kānū muslimīn. (15:2)*

"All the rest I have forgotten.' That was all he had to say.

"We beg Allāh to grant us well-being and safety from such an experience, and to bring us to a good conclusion, through Muḥammad and his family.

"A woman once came weeping to Shaikh Yūsuf, and she said to him: 'The Franks [*al-Ifranj*] have taken my son prisoner!' She begged him to recover her son for her, so he urged her to be patient. Patience was beyond her reach, however, so the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said: 'O Allāh, undo her son's captivity, and grant her speedy relief!' Then he said to her: 'Go to your home, for you will find him there, if Allāh (Exalted is He) so wills.' The woman went home, and, to her astonishment, she found her son in the house.

“When she asked him what had happened to him, he told her: ‘Just a moment ago, I was in Constantinople, bound and under guard, when a person—someone I did not recognize—came and carried me away. He brought me here like a flash of lightning.’ His mother came back to the Shaikh, and told him about this, so he said to her: ‘Are you amazed at the way Allāh does business? Allāh has certain servants who are sincerely devoted to their work, and He gives them free rein to operate as they see fit. May Allāh be well pleased with them!’”

Shaikh Yūsuf (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was born in the latter part of the year [A.H.] 440, in Būzitajard, one of the villages of Hamadān. He died in Nāmīn, which is also one of the villages of Hamadān, while he was on his way from Hawāzin to Marw, on Monday, the 12th of Rabi‘ al-Awwal, in the [A.H.] 535. He was buried there for a while, then his body was transported to Marw, where it was reburied. He was thus laid to rest in the farthest region of Sinjār,<sup>222</sup> in the locality connected with him. His tomb is a landmark there, and visits are frequently paid to it.

May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him. May He be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



<sup>222</sup> Sinjār is a province of Mesopotamia.

## 28. Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Umar as-Suhrawardī (d. A.H. 632)

As for that exemplary guide, the Shaikh of Shaikhs, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdī’llāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Amawiyya as-Suhrawardī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), we have mentioned him previously.<sup>223</sup> He was one of those outstanding figures of ‘Irāq, upon whom the leadership of this [spiritual] business devolved. He was learned, cultured, intelligent, refined, eloquent and insightful. He had been granted a share of noble esoteric knowledge [*‘ilm ladunī*], and he used to speak about the hidden mysteries. He was endowed with supernatural charismatic talents [*karāmāt khāriqa*]. He held fast to the Book and the Sunna, and diligently exercised his judgment in relation to the rules of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*] and the station of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*].

He was one of those acknowledged by our master and our Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who said to him: “O ‘Umar, you are the last of the famous men!”<sup>224</sup>

He had an exalted way of speaking about the mysterious flashes of insight [*lawāmi‘ ghaibiyya*] revealed to him by Allāh (Exalted is He). May Allāh be well pleased with him!

<sup>223</sup> As reported on p. 122 above, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn’s uncle once said to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him): “O my master, this is my brother’s son. He is actively engaged in the study of Islāmic theology [*‘ilm al-kalām*], and despite my having forbidden him to pursue it, he refuses to give it up.” In the words of Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn: “The Shaikh then asked me: ‘O ‘Umar, which book on the subject have you committed to memory?’ I said: ‘The book entitled such-and-such, and the book entitled such-and-such....’ When I came to the end of the list, he placed his blessed hand on my breast, and—by Allāh!—once he had withdrawn it, I could not remember a single sentence out of all those books. Allāh had made me forget all the topics discussed therein, and Allāh had implanted esoteric knowledge [*‘ilm ladunī*] in my breast, all in an instant.”

<sup>224</sup> For Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Umar’s own account of the occasion referred to here, see p. 122 above.

Najm ad-Dīn an-Naqlisī, the companion of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), has told us:

“I entered a period of retreat [*khalwa*] in Baghdād, in the presence of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him). In a visionary experience [*wāqi‘a*] on the fortieth day, I witnessed Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Umar on a high mountain, and I saw that there were many jewels beside him. The Shaikh held a scoop in his hand, and it was filled with those jewels. He was scattering them over the people, and they were rushing to pick them up. Whenever the supply of jewels became exhausted, it would be replenished, as if they were gushing from a fountain.

“At the end of that same day, I emerged from the retreat, and went to tell the Shaikh what I had witnessed. He said to me: ‘Before you speak to me about what you have seen, O my son, let me tell you that what you saw is real [*ḥaqq*]. Like other such experiences, it is part of the blessed favor conferred upon me by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), as a replacement for the science of theology [*‘ilm al-kalām*].’”<sup>225</sup>

Allāh (Exalted is He) had indeed granted him a free hand in effective disposition, and the permanent ability to perform supernatural feats. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

Here is a sample of his poetry:

[I heard her] saying to me:  
 “You slept on the night of our lovers’ union,”  
 so I said to her: “No knowledge had I of your approval.  
 Had I known it might be the night of satisfaction,  
 I would have spent every night awake to meet you.  
 Maybe some other night you will pass by our quarter,  
 and my heart will be eased of your painful disapproval.”

Here is one of his prayers of supplication (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

O Allāh, make us clearly aware  
*Allāhumma baṣṣir-nā*  
 of the faults of our lower selves,  
*bi-‘uyūbi anḥusi-nā*  
 so that we may recognize our faults.  
*li-nanzūra ‘uyūba-nā*

<sup>225</sup> See note 223 on p. 463 above.

And do not subject us to our lower selves  
*wa lā tumlik-nā ilā anfusi-nā*

for the twinkling of an eye.  
*ṭarfata 'ain.*

And help us to triumph over our enemies.  
*wa 'nṣur-nā 'alā a'dā'i-nā*

And do not put us to shame  
*wa lā tafḍaḥ-nā*

on the Day of Resurrection.  
*Yawma 'l-Qiyāma.*

Surely You will not fail to keep the trust!  
*inna-ka lā tukhlifu 'l-mī'ād.*<sup>226</sup>

It was Ibn an-Najjār who said: “He was the Shaikh of his time, in the science of Reality [*‘ilm al-Ḥaqīqa*] and the methods of Ṣūfism [*ṭarā'iq at-taṣawwuf*]. He assumed the role of leadership in the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*], the summoning of his fellow creatures to Allāh (Exalted is He), adherence to the path of worshipful service [*‘ibāda*], and pious abstinence [*zuhd*] from this world.

“He joined the fellowship of his paternal uncle, as well as that of other Shaikhs. He followed the path of spiritual exercises [*riyādāt*] and strenuous endeavors [*mujāhadāt*]. He studied Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], the differences of scholarly opinion [*khiḷāf*], and the Arabic language. He also attended classes on the Prophetic tradition [*Ḥadīth*]. Then he cut himself off [from the academic world], and made a constant practice of seclusion [*khalwa*], fasting [*ṣawm*], remembrance [*dhikr*] and worshipful service [*‘ibāda*].

“It occurred to him eventually, in his age of maturity, that he ought to appear before the people, and deliver public speeches. He therefore convened a regular preaching session [*majlis wa'ẓ*] at the schoolhouse of his paternal uncle. He attracted large audiences, and was greeted with general acceptance, by the privileged élite and the common folk alike. His name became widely known, and visitors flocked to him from all the regions and countries.

“His blessed qualities affected many disobedient sinners, who were thereby moved to repent. Through his influence, many people attained to contact with Allāh (Exalted is He). Companions gathered around him like stars.

<sup>226</sup> These final words of the Shaikh's supplication [*du'ā'*] occur in Q. 3:194.

“He dispatched a messenger to Syria, on several occasions, as well as to the Sulṭān, Khwārezm Shāh. He acquired dignified status and respect in the sight of kings, to a greater extent than anyone else.

“He was eventually appointed Shaikh at the Ṣūfī center [*ribāṭ*] of the Nāṣiriyya Order, at that of the Biṣṭāmiyya, and at that of the Maimūniyya.

“Then, in the latter part of his life, he suffered an injury that left him crippled. In spite of this condition, he did not neglect the litanies [*awrād*] and the constant practice of remembrance [*dhikr*]. He attended the congregational prayers on a litter, and even went on the Pilgrimage [*Ḥajj*]. He managed to stay active until he entered his tenth decade, when he finally became too weak, and retired to his private abode.

“He died (may Allāh be well pleased with him) on the night of Wednesday, the 1st of Muḥarram, in the year [A.H.] 632. He was carried to the Rose Garden [*al-Wardiyya*], and buried in a graveyard of his, in the precincts of his mosque [*masjid*], after his funeral prayer had been performed in the congregational mosque [*jāmiʿ*] of al-Ghuṣun.

“Suhraward<sup>227</sup> is a small town near Zanjān, in Persian ‘Irāq [*ʿIrāq al-ʿAjam*].” (Here ends the quotation.)

In his work entitled “History To Rely On for Accounts of the Bygone” [*at-Taʾrīkh al-muʿtabar fī anbāʾ man ghabar*], the Chief Justice [*Qāḍī ʿl-Quḍāt*] Mujīr ad-Dīn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-ʿUmārī al-ʿUlaimī al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī has informed us:

“Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad ibn Abdiʿllāh al-Bakrī is known by the surname Shihāb ad-Dīn as-Suhrawardī. His line of descent is linked to Abū Bakr, the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddīq*]. He was a jurist [*faqīh*] of the Shāfiʿ, school [*madhhab*], and a righteous Shaikh. In the latter part of his life, there was no one comparable to him in his generation. He was the Shaikh of Shaikhs in Baghdād. He had a blessed way of speaking, and he produced some beautiful literary works, including ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif [Bounties of Divine Knowledge].

<sup>227</sup> At this point in the original text, the author spells out the first syllable of <Suhraward>, using the appropriate Arabic terminology: *bi-ḍamma as-sīn al-muhmala*.

“He was born in Suhraward, and he died at the beginning of Sha‘bān, in the year [A.H.] 632, in Baghdād. He was buried the next morning, in the Rose Garden [*al-Wardīyya*].” (Here ends this abbreviated quotation.)

May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



## 29. Shaikh Jāgīr al-Kurdī

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Jāgīr al-Kurdī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) we have mentioned him previously.<sup>228</sup> He was one of the most notable Shaikhs, one of the most distinguished of those who know by direct experience [*‘ārifīn*] and are brought near [to the Lord], and one of the leaders of those experts who specialize in the realities [*muḥaqqiqīn bāri‘īn*]. He was endowed with keen insight, brilliant disclosure, supernatural perception, radiant intelligence, magnificent charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], splendid spiritual states, glorious spiritual stations, exquisite realizations, sublime experiences, lofty degrees in the ranks of nearness, and exalted distinction in the sessions of holiness.

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has presented in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He charged him with the administration of spiritual states, placed material substances at his disposal, disrupted the customary patterns of nature for his benefit, manifested wondrous marvels at his hands, allowed him to speak of the hidden mysteries, and caused words of wisdom to flow upon his tongue.

Shaikh Tāj al-‘Ārifīn<sup>229</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would often extol his merit and speak of him in glowing terms. He sent him his skullcap [*ṭāqīyya*] with Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hītī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and commanded him to put it on his head, by delegation from him. He did not require Shaikh Jāgīr to present himself to him in person. He said: “I asked Allāh (Exalted is He) to let Jāgīr be one of my pupils, and He granted him to me.”

The Shaikhs in ‘Irāq (may Allāh be well pleased with them) used to say: “Shaikh Jāgīr has shed his own lower self [*nafs*], just as the snake sheds its own skin.”

<sup>228</sup> See p. 328 above.

<sup>229</sup> See pp. 351–54 above.

It was he who used to say: “I have never accepted the pledge of allegiance from anyone, until I have seen his name inscribed on the Well-kept Tablet [*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*], as being one of my pupils.”

He once said (may Allāh be well pleased with him): “I have been given a sword, one edge of which cuts in the East, and the other in the West. If it were brandished at the towering mountains, they would tumble down.”

The leadership of this [spiritual] business devolved upon him, in his own region and the surrounding areas. Many people derived great benefit from him, and many of the righteous became affiliated to him. The Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them) declared him worthy of respect, and acknowledged his special merit.

Shaikh Jāgīr (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was graceful by nature, perfectly refined in his behavior, noble in his attributes, and charming in his qualities. Allāh (Exalted is He) confirmed him in adherence to the practices of the Sacred Law [*Sharīʿa*] and observance of the precepts of worshipful servitude [*ʿubūdiyya*]. He had an exalted way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the realities [*muḥaqqiqīn*] (may Allāh be well pleased with them all).

It was the righteous Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Ḥamīdī as-Sāʿirī who said: “The sustenance of our own Shaikh, Shaikh Jāgīr, came from the Unseen [*Ḡhaib*].”

Shaikh Abū Muḥammad also said: “I was in his presence one day, when some cows passed by him, together with their herdsman. He pointed to one of them, and said: ‘This cow is pregnant with a red calf, a bull, which will be born on the day of such-and-such, in the month of such-and-such.’ It has been dedicated to me, as a votive offering. The paupers [*fuqarāʾ*] will slaughter it on the day of such-and-such, and it will be eaten by so-and-so and so-and-so.’ Then he pointed to another cow, and said: ‘This one is pregnant with a female calf, the characteristics of which include such-and-such and such-and-such, and the time of its birth will be such-and-such. It has also been dedicated to me. One of the paupers, a man called so-and-so, will slaughter it. Then so-and-so and so-and-so will eat from it, and a red dog will also have a share in it.’”

The narrator went on to say: “By Allāh, I discovered that everything turned out exactly as the Shaikh (may Allāh be well

pleased with him) had described it. Not a single detail was lacking. A red dog came into the convent [*zāwiya*], snatched a piece of meat from the cow, and ran off with it.”

He also said: “A visitor came to him one day, and said to him: ‘O Shaikh Jāgīr, today I would like you to feed me with the flesh of a gazelle.’ Lo and behold, a gazelle came and stood in front of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who gave the command for it to be slaughtered. The gazelle was duly slaughtered, and that visitor ate some of it. I had served the Shaikh for seven years, and that was the only time I had ever seen a gazelle in the vicinity of the convent [*zāwiya*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

Shaikh Jāgīr (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in one of the deserts of ‘Irāq, in the vicinity of Qanṭarat ar-Raṣāṣ [the Bridge of Lead], a day’s journey from Sāmira.<sup>230</sup> He made his home there until he died, at a very advanced age, and there he was buried. His tomb is a local landmark, and visits are often paid to it. A village was built in the neighborhood, by people seeking his blessed grace. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



<sup>230</sup> Sāmira is ancient ruined city on the River Tigris, to the north of Baghdād.

### 30.

## Shaikh ‘Uthmān ibn Marwān al-Qurashī (d. A.H. 564)

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh ‘Uthmān ibn Marwān al-Qurashī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), we have mentioned him previously.<sup>231</sup> He was one of the preeminent Shaikhs in Egypt, one of the foremost of those brought near [to the Lord], and one of most outstanding of those who specialize in the realities [*muḥaqqiqīn*]. He was endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], remarkable spiritual states and stations, noble deeds and indications, and worthy aspirations.

He was one of those whom Allāh has presented in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He granted him freedom of disposal therein, entrusted him with the administration of spiritual states, and enabled him to combine the two sciences, the science of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*] and the science of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*].

Shaikh ‘Uthmān (may Allāh be well pleased with him) belonged to the Ḥanbali school [*madhhab*] of Islāmic jurisprudence.

He was gentle and virtuous, and he had a refined way of speaking, in the language of those endowed with direct knowledge [*ma‘rifa*]. Here are some of his wise sayings:

- The path to intimate knowledge of Allāh, His Power [*Qudra*] and His Attributes [*Ṣifāt*], is the path of reflection [*fikr*] and consideration of the wisdom of His signs [*āyāt*].

- There is no way for the faculties of reason [*albāb*] to fathom the core of His Essence [*Dhāt*].

- Even if the pearls of Divine wisdom [*ḥikam Ilāhiyya*] were to reach the farthest limit of the intellectual capacities [*‘uqūl*], and the Lordly Power [*Qudra Rabbāniyya*] was focused on the deepest depth of the rational sciences [*‘ulūm*], that would still be insufficient and inadequate.

<sup>231</sup> See pp. 93 above.

•The secrets of sempiternity [*azal*] would still be veiled from the eyes, just as the secrets of Majesty [*Jalāl*] are veiled from the faculties of sight. The true meaning of the description would cancel the description. The perceptive faculty would become blind to perception. The king would wander in the kingdom. The creature would return to its own kind, and the search for its form would prove difficult. Voices would humbly implore the All-Merciful [*ar-Raḥmān*], but only a whisper would be heard.

•All created entities, from the atom to the Heavenly Throne [*ʿArsh*], are paths connecting with the intimate knowledge of Allāh, and pilgrim routes [*ḥijaj*] that lead to His eternity-without-beginning [*azaliyya*].

•The entire realm of being [*kawn*] consists of tongues that speak of His Uniqueness [*Waḥdāniyya*].

•The entire universe [*ʿālam*] is a book, and the letters of its shapes and forms can be read by the perspicacious, to the extent of their perceptive faculties.

•Hey, you there! If someone has no angelic chider [*zājir*] in his heart, he is in a state of ruin. If the farmlands of a person's understanding are not watered by the rain of intimate knowledge [*maʿrifa*], he is a cloud. If someone is not patient in the fellowship of his Master [*Mawlā*], He will afflict him with the fellowship of His servants.

•The evidence of your alienation from creatures is your intimate friendship with your Master [*Mawlā*].

Shaikh ʿUthmān (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would often quote these verses of poetry:

O Planter of love between the heart and the liver!

O You who take the place of the spirit in the body!

O You who substitute for death, You have driven it away.  
You have torn the veil of patience asunder, and the skin.

Love has conveyed me to the highest of all its degrees,  
so if I wished for more from it, no more would I find.

If people call my heart away from You, it is inclined  
to hope for the best, so it neither reacts nor responds.

If You please me, I shall not wander,  
since You are a substitute for me,  
and if You alter, I shall not rely on anyone.

According to the compiler of the book entitled *Rawḍ al-Abrār wa Maḥāsin al-Akhyār* [The Gardens of the Righteous and the Merits of the Best]:

“He died and was buried next to the tomb of ash-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), in Cairo. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

The author of *Bahjat al-Asrār* [The Splendor of the Mysteries] provides the following information:

“As for Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān ibn Marzūq ibn Ḥamīd ibn Salāma al-Qurashī al-Ḥanbalī, he settled in Cairo and made it his home. It was there that he died, in the year [A.H.] 564. He was buried in its principal cemetery [*qarāfa*], to the east of the tomb of ash-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), in the area bordering on its column. His tomb is a conspicuous landmark, and visits are often paid to it. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”



## 31. Shaikh Suwaid as-Sinjārī

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Suwaid as-Sinjārī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), we have mentioned him previously. He was one of the preeminent Shaikhs of the East, one of the most outstanding of those who know by direct experience [*‘ārifīn*], and one of the most distinguished of those who specialize in the realities [*muḥaqqiqīn*]. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], splendid spiritual states, sublime spiritual stations, supernatural feats, exalted indications and worthy aspirations.

He held the highest position in the degrees of nearness, the loftiest peak in the ranks of connection, the highest level in the grades of the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*], and the most exalted eminence in the progressive stages of the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*].

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has presented in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He granted him freedom of disposal in the universe [*‘ālam*], established him in control of the spiritual states, entrusted him with the management of affairs, and invested him with the reins of the people in the final stages of development. He made him privy to the wondrous marvels of the unseen realms [*ghuyūb*], and caused him to utter words of wisdom on all kinds of subjects. He instilled complete acceptance of him in the breasts of His creatures, and instilled abundant respect for him in their hearts.

Allāh (Exalted is He) established him as a leader [*imām*] and a proof [*ḥujja*] for those who tread the Spiritual Path [*sālikīn*], and enabled him to combine the two sciences, the science of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*] and the science of Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*].

The leadership of this [spiritual] business devolved upon him, in the spheres of knowledge and practice [*‘ilm wa ‘amal*], real achievement [*taḥqīq*], pious abstinence [*zuhd*], and sublimity [*jalāla*]. He

became the principal authority, in his day and age, for the training of genuine spiritual seekers [*murīdīn ṣādiqīn*] in Sinjār<sup>232</sup> and the neighboring districts. More than a few of the most distinguished Shaikhs received their education in his fellowship, including Shaikh Ḥasan at-Tala‘fari and Shaikh ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āshūr as-Sinjārī, to name only two of them. A host of the righteous (may Allāh be well pleased with them) propagated his teaching, and many of the religious scholars [*‘ulamā’*] became affiliated to him. The scholars and the Shaikhs were unanimous in declaring him worthy of the greatest honor and respect.

Our Shaikh and our master, Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), would often extol his merit and mention his special virtue. He attracted visitors from every region and country, and his fame spread to the far horizons. He was graceful, handsome, perfectly refined in his behavior, and modestly humble. He combined the most noble traits of character, the most honorable dispositions, and the most brilliant attributes.

He had a noble way of speaking about the esoteric sciences [*‘ulūm al-ma‘ārif*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- The forms of knowledge are three: (1) knowledge about Allāh [*‘ilm minā ‘llāh*] (Exalted is He); (2) knowledge in the presence of Allāh [*‘ilm ma‘a ‘llāh*] (Exalted is He); and (3) knowledge because of Allāh [*‘ilm bi‘llāh*] (Exalted is He).

[In other words]: (1) knowledge of the outer [*‘ilm aṣ-ṣāḥir*]; (2) knowledge of the inner [*‘ilm al-bāṭin*]; and (3) knowledge of wisdom [*‘ilm al-ḥukm*].

- The basic principle of comprehension is silence [*aṣl al-‘aql aṣ-ṣamt*].

- When passion prevails, the faculty of reason disappears [*idhā ghalaba ‘l-hawā tawwāra ‘l-‘aql*].

The righteous Shaikh Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Makhzūmī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) has told us: “It was the noble Shaikh Abu ‘l-Majd Sālim ibn Aḥmad al-Ya‘qūbī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“A man from the people of Sinjār would often disparage the righteous predecessors [*salaf*], for no reason at all, so he eventually

<sup>232</sup> See note 222 on p. 462 above.

fell sick. When he was near the point of death, he started saying all sorts of things, anything but the two professions of faith [*shahādatain*].<sup>233</sup> When someone told him to say: “There is no god but Allāh [*lā ilāha illa ’llāh*],” he would reply: “I have not received permission to say that.”

“The people therefore clamored for Shaikh Suwaid (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who came and sat beside the man. The Shaikh hung his head in silence for a long time, then he said: “Say: ‘There is no god but Allāh [*lā ilāha illa ’llāh*].’” The man said it, and said it again and again, as the Shaikh made him repeat it several times. Then the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) explained: “That was his punishment for his disparagement of the righteous predecessors (may Allāh be well pleased with them all). I interceded for him with my Lord (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He), and I was told: ‘We shall accept your intercession on his behalf, provided Our saints of bygone times [*awliyā’u-na ’s-sālifūn*] are well pleased with him.’”

“The Shaikh went on to say: “I therefore entered the noble presence [of those saints], and begged pardon for his sin from Ma’rūf al-Karkhi,<sup>234</sup> Sarī as-Saqāṭī,<sup>235</sup> al-Junaid,<sup>236</sup> ash-Shiblī,<sup>237</sup> Abū Yazīd<sup>238</sup> and others (may Allāh be well pleased with them all). The

<sup>233</sup> The two professions of faith [*shahādatain*] are: “I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh [*ashhadu an lā ilāha illa ’llāh*],” and: “I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh [*ashhadu anna Muḥammadar Rasūlu ’llāh*].”

<sup>234</sup> See note 39 on p. 71 above.

<sup>235</sup> See note 57 on p. 90 above.

<sup>236</sup> See note 29 on p. 57 above.

<sup>237</sup> Abū Bakr ibn Jaḥdar ash-Shiblī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was of Khurāsānian origin, although born in Baghdād or Samarra. The son of a court official, he rose through the ranks of the imperial service. While in Baghdād for the occasion of his investiture as Governor of Demavend, he experienced conversion. He joined the circle of al-Junaid (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), played a leading part in the stormy history of al-Ḥallāj (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), and was committed to an asylum on account of his eccentric behavior. He died in A.H. 334/946 C.E. at the age of 87. (See: A.J. Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966; pp. 277–86.)

<sup>238</sup> Abū Yazīd Ṭaifūr ibn ‘Isā ibn Soroushān al-Bisṭāmī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), whose grandfather Soroushān was a Zoroastrian, was born in the district of Bisṭām in northeastern Persia, and it was there that he died in A.H. 261 or 264/874 or 877 C.E. His mausoleum still stands as a place of pious visitation. He is famous for the boldness of his utterances, and is regarded as the founder of the ecstatic or “drunken” school of Islāmic mysticism (as opposed to the “sober” school founded by al-Junaid).

man's tongue then pronounced the two professions of faith [*shahādatain*]. He said to me: 'Each time I tried to pronounce the testimony, something black would jump at me. It would tie my tongue in a knot, to prevent me from speaking, and it would say to me: "I am your disparagement of the saints of Allāh (Exalted is He)."' But then a light came beaming after it, and chased that blackness away from me. The light told me: "I am the good pleasure bestowed upon you by Allāh's saints (may Allāh be well pleased with them all)."

""Then the man said: 'I found myself looking at steeds of light, between the heaven and the earth. The air was filled with riders of light, mounted upon those steeds of light, and they were lowering their heads in awe, as they cried:

All-Glorious, All-Holy!  
Subbūh—Quddūs.

Lord of the Angels and the Spirit!  
Rabba 'l-Malā'ikati wa 'r-Rūḥ.

""The man kept repeating the two professions of faith [*shahādatain*] until he died. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him.""

It was the enlightened Shaikh 'Uthmān ibn 'Ashūr as-Sinjārī who said: "Shaikh Suwaid was in the mosque [*masjid*] one day, when a blind man came in to perform the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*]. He turned to face in a direction other than the *Qibla*, so the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) exclaimed: 'O Allāh, restore the light of vision to his eyes!' The man left the mosque as someone endowed with perfect eyesight, and he lived a prosperous life from then until he died, some twenty years later. May Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him!"

That enlightened Shaikh, whose prayer of supplication was sure to be answered, Abū Man'a ibn Salāma al-Gharūqī, widely known as ar-Ruwaiḥaj (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), has informed us:

"A man had his nose cut off, though not by an act of lawful retaliation [*qiṣās*]. When Shaikh Suwaid came to know of his condition, he took the piece of the man's nose that had been amputated, put it back in its place, and said: 'In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate [*Bismi'llāhi 'r-Raḥmāni 'r-Raḥīm*].' The man's nose was immediately restored to its original healthy condition.

“One day, Shaikh Suwaid passed by a victim of elephantiasis [*majdhūm*]. Worms were wriggling all over his body, and blood and pus were oozing from his skin. The physicians could find no cure for his disease, and he had been in that condition for several years. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said: ‘O my Master, since You are Self-Sufficient [*Ghanī*], You have no need of his torment, so relieve him of his agony!’ The man was restored to good health at that very moment, and he was completely cured, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He).”

Shaikh Suwaid (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in Sinjār, and made his home there until he died, as a very old man. His tomb is a local landmark, and visits are frequently paid to it.

Some say that his personal name was Naşru’llāh, but he was nicknamed Suwaid [Little Blackie], and the nickname displaced the other, despite the fact that color of his skin was pink. May Allāh be well pleased with him!



32.  
Shaikh Ḥayāt ibn Qais al-Ḥarrānī  
(d. A.H. 581)

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Ḥayāt ibn Qais al-Ḥarrānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the finest of the Shaikhs, one of the greatest of those who know by direct experience [*‘ārifīn*], and one of the most distinguished of those who specialize in the realities [*muḥaqqiqīn*]. He was endowed with supernatural charismatic talents [*karāmāt khāriqa*], glorious spiritual states, lofty spiritual stations, prodigious splendors, magnificent aspirations, and momentous beginnings. He was also endowed with penetrating insight, brilliantly clear disclosure, and excellent worth.

He held high standing in nearness, the loftiest peak in the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*], the highest levels in the grades of development and the ascending degrees of effectiveness, and priority in the ranks of preeminence.

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has presented in high profile to His creatures, for He granted him freedom of management in the realm of existence [*wujūd*], placed material substances at his disposal, and disrupted the customary patterns of nature for his benefit. He manifested wondrous marvels at his hands, caused him to speak about the hidden mysteries, and established him in control of the spiritual states.

Allāh (Exalted is He) appointed him as a proof [*ḥujja*] and an exemplary guide [*quḍwa*] for the people of the Spiritual Path, with a firm footing in independent judgment [*ijtihād*], a far-reaching grasp in effective disposition, and remarkable expertise in the exercise of authority, all combined with modest humility and noble generosity.

He was one of the pillars of this [spiritual] business, one of its foremost leaders, one of the standards of the scholars versed in its principles, and one of its chief exponents.

He is one of the four Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them) who are able to function in their graves, with the same freedom as the living.<sup>239</sup>

The leadership of this [spiritual] business devolved upon him, in the spheres of knowledge and practice [*‘ilm wa ‘amal*], spiritual state [*ḥāl*], pious abstinence [*zuḥd*], and sublimity [*jalāla*]. He became the principal authority for the training of genuine spiritual seekers [*murīdīn muḥaqqiqīn*]. Of those endowed with spiritual stations, more than a few received their education in his fellowship, and his students included many of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states. His teaching was propagated by numerous distinguished individuals, and countless notables became affiliated to him.

He was held in high esteem by the Shaikhs and the scholars, and by others too. More than a few of the Shaikhs sat in front of him, and people turned to him for advice, more often than to anyone else in his day and age. His excellence was acknowledged by the privileged élite and the common folk alike, his merit was generally recognized, and he was treated with honor and respect. For all the people of Ḥarrān<sup>240</sup> and the surrounding districts, he was an unfailing source of spiritual nourishment. They had recourse to him with their difficult problems, and those problems were invariably resolved. As for his ways of dealing with such matters, they are too well known to need mentioning here.

Shaikh Ḥayāt ibn Qais (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had an exquisite way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the realities [*ahl al-ḥaqā’iq*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- Love keeps the heart in a state of suspense, between reverential awe and intimate friendship [*al-maḥabba tu‘alliq al-qalb baina ’l-ḥaiba wa ’l-uns*].

- Love is the mark of the Ṣūfī association [*ṭā’ifa*], and the sign of the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*].

<sup>239</sup> The others are said to be: Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Shaikh Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī, and Shaikh ‘Uqail al-Manjibī (may Allāh be well pleased with them). (See p. 399 above.)

<sup>240</sup> Ḥarrān is the ancient Carrhae in Mesopotamia.

• Love attaches [the lover] to the Beloved [*Maḥbūb*], and to the meeting that is sought [*al-liqā' al-maṭlūb*].

• The lover wins the contest with clear reason, and he considers death delightful, so he never jostles with the crowd, and at no time pushes to the fore.

• Suddenly the Truth appears, with the impact of the spiritual state, the impact of ecstasy [*wajd*], the impact of disclosure, the impact of connection, and the impact of the gift, in answer to the yearning for direct perception [*'iyān*].

• The value of shells depends upon their kernels [*qīmat al-qushūr bi-lubābi-hā*].

• The value of men depends upon their faculties of understanding [*qīmat ar-rijāl bi-albābi-hā*].

• The value of palaces depends upon their lords [*qīmat al-quṣūr bi-arbābi-hā*].

• The glory of lovers depends upon their loved ones [*fakhr al-aḥibba bi-aḥbābi-hā*].

• When the fire of love appears, it kills opponents, brings years to life, keeps secrets intact, makes evils extinct, and produces many effects [*inna nār al-maḥabba idhā badat amātat quwwāman wa aḥyat a'wāman wa abqat asrāran wa afnat ashārān wa tu'aththir āthārā*].

It was the noble Shaikh Abū Ḥaṣṣ 'Umar, the son of the exemplary Shaikh Ḥayāt ibn Qais al-Ḥarrānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who said:

“Shaikh Zaghīb ar-Raḥbī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once came to visit my father in Ḥarrān. He arrived after the dawn prayer [*ṣalāt aṣ-ṣubḥ*], to find my father sitting at the door of his house, with a she-goat of his in front of him. The visitor saluted him with the greeting of peace, and sat down on a bench on the opposite side of the doorway. The space between them was more than ten cubits in width. My father did not speak to him, so Shaikh Zaghīb said to himself: ‘I have come here all the way from ar-Raḥba, and he is too busy looking after a she-goat to take any notice of me!’

“At that point, my father (may Allāh be well pleased with him) looked at him, and said: ‘O Zaghīb, I have been commanded to inflict

some injury upon you, because of your protest. So choose where you would rather take it: on your outer body, or your inner being!’ ‘O my master,’ said he, ‘on my outer body, of course!’ My father then made a slight gesture with his hand, and pointed with one of his fingers. One of Shaikh Zaghib’s eyes drooped onto his cheek, so he bent down and kissed the ground, then returned to ar-Raḥba.

“When I met him again, some years later, his eyes were perfectly normal, so I asked him what had happened, and he said: ‘I was at the spiritual concert [*samāʿ*] in our town, and one of the other men present was a pupil of your father’s (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He placed his hand on my eye, and it returned to its normal, healthy condition, as you can see, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He). When your father (may Allāh be well pleased with him) pointed his finger at my eye, and it drooped down onto my cheek, an eye opened up inside my heart. With that inner eye, I witnessed secret mysteries, and beheld the essence of the wondrous marvels that are the signs of Allāh (Exalted is He), through the blessed grace of the Shaikh. May Allāh be well pleased with him!’”

It was Shaikh ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Abi ‘l-Faraj al-Ḥarrānī, widely known as Ibn al-Qubāiṭī, who said:

“A mosque [*masjid*] was built in Ḥarrān, and, when they were about to install its prayer-niche [*miḥrāb*], Shaikh Ḥayāt appeared on the site. He said to the senior architectural engineer [*muhandis*]: ‘The *Qibla* [direction of the Ka‘ba in Mecca] is such-and-such.’ ‘No,’ said the architect, ‘it is such-and-such.’ ‘Look with your heart,’ said the Shaikh, ‘and you will see the *Qibla*.’ The architect looked, and there was the Ka‘ba, adorned by Allāh (Exalted is He) with extra nobility. It stood immediately in front of him, without any obstacle between him and it, so he fell prostrate on the ground, in a fit of unconsciousness.”

It was Shaikh Najīb ad-Dīn ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Ḥarrānī aṣ-Ṣāqilī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said:

“In a certain year, they broke their journey to take a rest. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and the people who were with him, sought refuge from the sun in the shade a gum-arabic tree [*umm ghailān*]. ‘O my master,’ his servant told him: ‘I feel a keen appetite for ripe dates,’ so the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased

with him) said to him: ‘Shake this tree!’ His servant objected: ‘O my master, this is a gum-arabic tree,’ but he insisted: ‘Shake it!’ The servant did as he was told, and a harvest of ripe dates came showering down upon him. They all ate their fill, then they continued on their journey. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!”

Shaikh Ḥayāt (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in Ḥarrān, and he made his home there till he died, on the night of Wednesday, the last day of Jumādā ’l-Ākhira, in the year [A.H.] 581. He was buried on the outskirts of Ḥarrān, and his tomb is often visited. May Allāh be well pleased with him!



### 33. Shaikh Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān ibn Marwaza al-Baṭā’ihī

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān ibn Marwaza al-Baṭā’ihī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], splendid spiritual states, lofty spiritual stations, penetrating insight and brilliant disclosure. He made extraordinary progress in the initial stages [*bidāyāt*], and achieved the highest degree in the final stages of spiritual development [*nihāyāt*]. He had a far-reaching grasp of the secrets of direct witnessing [*asrār al-mushāhadāt*], and a firm footing in the stations of direct contact [*maqāmāt al-wuṣūl*].

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has presented in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He manifested wondrous marvels at his hands, and filled the hearts of His creatures with love for him. Accounts of his charismatic exploits [*manāqib*] were carried far and wide. The Shaikhs considered him worthy of the greatest honor and respect. He was highly refined in his behavior, modest to the point of humility, and inclined to shy away from public situations.

He had some interesting things to say about the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*], for instance:

- The hearts of the saints are the vessels of intimate knowledge [*qulūb al-awliyā’ aw‘iyat al-ma‘rifa*].

- The hearts of those who learn by direct experience are the vessels of love [*qulūb al-‘arīfīn aw‘iyat al-maḥabbā*].

- The hearts of the lovers are the vessels of direct witnessing [*qulūb al-muḥibbīn aw‘iyat al-mushāhada*].

- The hearts of those who witness directly are the vessels of useful lessons [*qulūb al-mushāhidīn aw‘iyat al-fawā’id*].

• It is important to note, however, that each of these spiritual states has its rules of proper conduct [*ādāb*]. If someone fails to put them into practice, at the appropriate times, he will surely perish.

• The heedless [*ghāfilūn*] live their lives in the jurisdiction [*ḥukm*] of Allāh (Exalted is He).

• Those who practice remembrance [*dhākirūn*] live their lives in the spirit [*rūḥ*] of Allāh (Exalted is He).

• Those who learn by direct experience [*al-ʿarīfūn*] live their lives in the grace [*luṭf*] of Allāh (Exalted is He).

• The truthful [*aṣ-ṣādiqūn*] live their lives in the nearness [*qurb*] of Allāh (Exalted is He)

• The lovers [*muhibbūn*] live their lives at the table-mat [*bisāṭ*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), where he feeds them and quenches their thirst.

It was Shaikh Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn Muṣaddiq ar-Rabī'ī al-Wāsiṭī who said: "Shaikh 'Uthmān ibn Marwaza al-Baṭā'ihī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) spent the early part of his career as a wanderer in al-Baṭā'ih.<sup>241</sup> During that period of eleven years, he saw no one, never took refuge in a dwelling place, and ate nothing but permissible foodstuffs [*mubāḥāt*]. At the beginning of each year, a man used to bring him a *jubba*<sup>242</sup> made of wool [*ṣūf*], for him to wear.

"One night, a brilliant array of lights appeared to him, and the perfection of Divine Majesty [*Jalāl*] was made manifest to him. He stood rooted to the spot, with his gaze fixed on the heaven above. For the next seven years, he never once sat down, and he neither ate nor drank. Then he returned to the normal patterns of human behavior. Within his innermost being [*sirr*], he heard a voice telling him: 'You must go to your village, and have sexual intercourse with your wife, for you have a son in your loins, and the time has come for him to emerge.'

"He went to his village, and knocked at the door of his house. His wife spoke to him, and he entered into her presence. When he told her the reason for his coming home, his wife said to him: 'If you do [have sexual intercourse with me], and then go back to your place,

<sup>241</sup> See note 163 on p. 343 above.

<sup>242</sup> The *jubba* is a long outer garment, open at the front, with wide sleeves.

while nobody knows who you are, people will gossip about me.' The Shaikh responded by climbing up to the roof of his house, and shouting at the top of his voice: 'O people of this village! I am 'Uthmān ibn Marwaza! Mount, for I am about to mount!'

"Allāh (Exalted is He) caused the sound of his voice to reach all the people in the village, and He made them understand the meaning of his words. Upon every man in the village, who duly had sexual intercourse with his wife that night, Allāh (Exalted is He) bestowed the blessing of a righteous son.<sup>243</sup>

"Then the Shaikh performed the major ritual ablution [*ightasala*], and returned to his place in the canyon [*baṭīha*]. For another seven years, he stood gazing toward the heaven above. The hair of his head grew so long that it covered his private parts [*'awra*]. Bushes sprouted up all around him. The lions and other wild beasts befriended him, as did the birds. In his presence, the dogs used to play with the lions, and those savage creatures never did them any harm. Then he returned once again to the normal patterns of human behavior, and made up the obligatory religious duties [*farā'id*] of fourteen years."

Shaikh Abu 'l-Faṭḥ ibn Abi 'l-Ghanā'im al-Wāsiṭī has informed us:

"A man once came to Shaikh Aḥmad ibn ar-Rifā'ī, leading an emaciated bull. 'O my master,' he said to him, 'we have nothing, my family and I. We have no source of livelihood, apart from the work performed by this bull. It is now too weak to go on working, so appeal to Allāh (Exalted is He) on its behalf, that He may grant it strength and blessing.' Shaikh Aḥmad (may Allāh be well pleased with him) told him: 'Take it to Shaikh 'Uthmān ibn Marwaza. Salute him with the greeting of peace, from me, and ask him to offer a prayer of supplication [*du'ā'*], for me, for the bull, and for you in your difficult situation.'

"The man went off, leading the bull, to look for Shaikh 'Uthmān (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He found him sitting in the canyon [*baṭīha*], with lions crouching all around him. The Shaikh told him to come close, so he approached him, and the first thing he said was: 'And peace be on the saint [*walī*], Shaikh Aḥmad! May

<sup>243</sup> For a remarkably similar story, concerning the father of Shaikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), see p. 381 above.

Allāh (Exalted is He) set the seal of goodness on me, on him, and on all the Muslims.' Then he signaled to a lion, which promptly pounced on the bull, and ate some of its flesh. Then he told it to stop, and it left the bull alone. He kept ordering one lion after another to eat, until there was no flesh left on that bull.

"At that very moment, a fat bull came along and stood in front of the Shaikh, so he said to the man, the owner of the other bull: 'Take this one, as a replacement for your old bull.' The man went up to it, and took hold of it, but he said to himself: 'My bull has been destroyed, and I am afraid that this may affect my reputation, so that I shall suffer because of it.' Just then, another man came running onto the scene. He stopped in front of the Shaikh, kissed his hand, and said to him: 'O my master, I had vowed to present you with a bull. I brought it to the canyon [*baṭīḥa*], but it gave me the slip, and I have no idea where it can have gone.'

"O my dear son,' the Shaikh told him, 'it is right here. It has just arrived, as you can see.' As soon as the man caught sight of it, he bowed down at the Shaikh's feet, kissing them as he said: 'O my master, Allāh (Exalted is He) has made you familiar with everything, and He has made everything familiar with you, including the animals!' The Shaikh responded by saying: 'The friend has nothing to fear from his friend. When someone is intimately acquainted with Allāh (Exalted is He), He makes him intimately acquainted with everything.'

"The Shaikh then turned to the other man, the owner of the bull, and said: 'You are quarreling with me in your heart, and you are saying: "My bull has been destroyed, and I am afraid that this may affect my reputation, so that I shall suffer because of it."' The man burst into tears, so the Shaikh said to him: 'Surely you must know that I know what is in your heart! Go now, and may Allāh (Exalted is He) bestow His blessing on you and on your bull.' He accepted the animal, and started to leave, but he said to himself: 'I am afraid for myself, and for the bull, on account of the lions.'

"The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said to him: 'You are afraid that those lions may interfere with you.' 'O my master, that is indeed the case,' said the man. The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then signaled to a lion in front of him,

instructing it to go along with him, until he felt that he and his bull were out of danger. That lion protected him well, guarding him to right and left, and chasing other lions and wild beasts away from him, just as it would have protected its own cubs. It sometimes walked to the right of him, sometimes to the left of him, sometimes in front of him, and sometimes behind him, until he arrived at his place of safety.

“When he came to Shaikh Aḥmad ibn ar-Rifāʿī, and told him his story, Shaikh Aḥmad wept as he said: ‘Since Ibn Marwaza was born, the women have been incapable of giving birth to anyone like him!’

“Allāh (Exalted is He) bestowed His blessing on the man, especially where his bull was concerned. It sired many calves, so he came to possess a considerable fortune, through the blessed grace of the supplication offered by the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him).”

It was Shaikh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf ibn Aḥmad al-Qurashī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Seven individuals, all of them crossbow archers [*rumāt al-bunduq*], once gathered in the canyon [*baṭīḥa*] where Shaikh ʿUthmān was residing. They shot down many birds, until heaps of them lay upon the ground, and no bird touched the earth unless it was dead. The Shaikh said to them: ‘It is not lawful for you to eat these birds, or to feed them to anyone else, because they are carrion [*maita*].’ The archers responded by saying, as if they were joking with him: ‘Well then, why don’t you bring them back to life?’ The Shaikh thereupon exclaimed:

In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All- Compassionate.  
*Bismi’l-lāhi ’r-Raḥmāni ’r-Raḥīm.*

Bring them to life, O Reviver of the dead,  
*aḥyi-hā yā Muḥyiya ’l-mawtā*

O Reviver of the bones when they have rotted away!<sup>244</sup>  
*yā Muḥyiya ’l-’izāmi wa ḥiya ramīm.*

“All of those birds immediately rose up and flew away, by the command of Allāh (Exalted is He), until they had disappeared from view. The archers watched them till they were out of sight, then they repented. They vowed to give up hunting with the crossbow and

<sup>244</sup> In this invocation, Shaikh ʿUthmān (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was alluding to the words of Allāh (Exalted is He) in Q 36:78,79.

similar pursuits, and committed themselves to the service of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him)."

Shaikh 'Abd al-Laṭīf also said: "Two men from al-Baṭā'ihī once set out to visit him. One of them was blind, and the other was a victim of elephantiasis [*majdhūm*]. They hoped that he would offer a prayer of supplication on their behalf, appealing for their health to be restored. Somewhere along the road, they met a man in excellent health. He asked them about their condition, so they told him their story. He then said to them: 'This man is not Mary's son Jesus [*Īsā 'bnu Maryam*]! By Allāh, even if I saw him cure a person blind from birth, I would not say that it was true!'

"Then he accompanied them into the presence of the Shaikh, who said: 'O blindness! O elephantiasis! Transfer yourselves from this pair to this other man!' The blind man instantly recovered his sight, and the victim of elephantiasis was completely cured. As for the healthy man, he was stricken with blindness and elephantiasis, by the command of Allāh (Exalted is He). The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said to him: 'If you wish, you may affirm the truth, and if you wish, you may deny it!' Then they left his presence in that condition, and each of them died in the state in which he had been, at the time when he took his leave of the Shaikh."

Shaikh 'Uthmān (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in al-Baṭā'ihī, and he made his home there until he died, as a very old man. He was buried there, and his tomb is a prominent site, to which visits are often paid.

When speaking about the state of his life, he used to say: "My spirit is summoned, so it responds." When his death was at hand, he was heard to say: "Doubly at Your service, O Allāh! At Your service, inwardly and outwardly [*labbai-ka Allāhumma labbai-k*]." May Allāh be well pleased with him!



## 34. Shaikh Maḥmūd an-Na‘āl (A.H. 523–609)

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Abu ‘th-Thanā’ Maḥmūd ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Makārim an-Na‘āl al-Baghdādī al-Azajī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was a jurist [*faqīh*], a preacher [*wā‘iz*] and a pious abstainer [*zāhid*]. He was endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], and devoted to rigorous spiritual exercises [*riyādāt*] and exertions [*mujāhadāt*]. He was an excellent example of pious abstinence, righteousness and gracefulness. He considered the interests of his companions before his own, and many people derived great benefit from him. He was dignified, gentle and sagacious, and he always wore a cheerful smile. He used to fast all year long, and he would recite the entire Qur’ān every day and night. All he would ever eat was a kind of vermicelli, prepared by his paternal aunt.

The following information about him is supplied by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab, in his *Ṭabaqāt* [Generations]:

“Abu ‘th-Thanā’, or, as some say, Abu ‘sh-Shukr, is also known by the honorific title Nāṣir ad-Dīn [Helper of the Religion]. He was born in the year [A.H.] 523, in Baghdād. He studied the Qur’ān, and took lessons in the Prophetic tradition [*ḥadīth*] from Abu ‘l-Faṭḥ ibn al-Baṭī. He became a traditional narrator, and memorized the *Mukhtaṣar* [Compendium] of al-Kharqī. He also studied under Abu ‘l-Faṭḥ ibn al-Mannī. He spent some time in the fellowship of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, and received a fine education from him. Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] and Qur’ānic exegesis [*tafsīr*] were among the subjects he studied.

“He used to hold preaching sessions in his guesthouse [*ribāt*], and his guesthouse was a meeting place for devoutly religious people, spiritual paupers [*fuqarā’*], and jurists [*fuqahā’*] who were strangers

to Baghdād. Abu 'l-Faṭḥ ibn al-Ḥanbalī has told us: 'When I arrived in Baghdād, in the year [A.H.] 602, I sought lodging in the guesthouse, but not a single apartment in it was vacant, so I had an extra apartment built, and made the place my home.'

"Shaikh Maḥmūd and his companions were aggressive in denouncing everything reprehensible [*munkar*]. If they discovered intoxicating liquor, for instance, they would spill it and flush it away. Their conduct in this area was often quite sensational and alarming, as when the Shaikh rebuked a party of government officers [*umarā'*], and scattered the wine they were drinking. This resulted in ongoing strife between him and them, and he was flogged several times.

"He was intensely dedicated to Allāh's religion [*dīn*]. He was distinguished by courageous audacity, and a commitment to sacred combat [*jihād*]. He made a frequent practice of remembrance [*dhikr*]. He used to be called "the Police Force of the Ḥanbalis [*Shiḥnat al-Ḥanābila*]." (Here ends this abbreviated excerpt from the book referred to above.)

Shaikh Maḥmūd died on the night of Wednesday, the 10th of Ṣafar, in the year [A.H.] 609. He was buried that same night, within the confines of his guesthouse [*ribāṭ*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



### 35.

## Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān al-Mawṣili (d. ca. A.H. 570)

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān<sup>245</sup> al-Mawṣili (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the glorious and famous saints [*awliyāʾ*], and one of the celebrated nobles [*nubalāʾ*]. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] and magnificent spiritual states. He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) presents in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He instilled complete acceptance of him in the hearts of His creatures, granted him freedom of disposal in the universe [*ʿālam*], and disrupted the customary patterns of nature for his benefit.

The Shaikhs and the saints [*awliyāʾ*] used to speak of him frequently, drawing attention to his excellent merit. He was often referred in the messages [*rasāʾil*] conveyed from Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir to Shaikh ʿAdī ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with them).

His most distinctive features were total immersion [*istighrāq*] and rapture [*walāh*] in his spiritual state, his charismatic talents, his traversing the ends of the earth with a single step, and his many spiritual encounters with the Shaikhs and the saints [*awliyāʾ*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

He had important things to say about the sciences of the realities [*ʿulūm al-ḥaqāʾiq*], for example:

- Rectification of the initial stages [of spiritual development] is accomplished through revocation of the license to accommodate the lower self [*nafs*]; strict application of the Sunna, in compliance with the [Divine] commandment; compliance with the rules of the Shaikhs, without protest; contempt for personal achievement; keen awareness of the appointed term; and holding fast to the rope of sincere devotion [*ikh-lāṣ*], for the sake of deliverance and salvation [*khalāṣ*].

<sup>245</sup> The name Qaḍīb al-Bān means “Twig of the Fragrant Ben-tree.”

• This you must know: It is pointless to set your sights on the final stages, except through genuine fulfillment [*taḥqīq*] of the initial stages.

It was Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Qurashī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said: "I once tried to enter the presence of Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān, at his apartment in Mosul [*Mawṣil*], but I saw that he had filled the whole room with his own body, which had grown to supernatural proportions. I quickly went away, for the sight of him was terrifying to me. Then I came back to him. This time I saw him in the corner of the room, where he had shrunk to the size of a sparrow. Again I went away, and then came back to him. This time I saw him in his usual condition, so I said: 'O my master, tell me about the first situation, and about the second situation, too!'"

"O 'Alī,' said the Shaikh, 'do you mean to tell me that you saw them both?' 'Yes,' said I, so he said: 'You really need to lose your eyesight! As for the first situation, He was in my presence, through a manifestation of the Divine Beauty [*Jamāl*]. As for the second situation, I was in His presence, through a vision of the Divine Majesty [*Jalāl*].'"

Shaikh 'Alī did become blind, shortly before his death. May Allāh be well pleased with them both!

He also mentioned that a certain group once discussed the Shaikh in the presence of the erudite Imām Ibn Yūnus al-Mawṣilī, the author of a commentary on a work entitled *at-Tanbīh* [Notification], at his schoolhouse in Mosul. They slandered him, and Shaikh Ibn Yūnus concurred with them.

While they were still engaged in their session, wallowing in that slanderous talk, in came Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān (may Allāh be well pleased with him). They were thrown into confusion, so the Shaikh began by addressing them with: "Peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings [*as-salāmu 'alai-kum wa raḥmatu 'llāhi wa barakātu-h*]!" Then he said: "O Ibn Yūnus, do you know everything that Allāh knows (Exalted is He)?" "No," he replied, so the Shaikh said to him: "Could it be that I am part of the knowledge you do not possess?" Ibn Yūnus fell silent, and gave no answer at all.

It was Shaikh 'Abdu'llāh al-Maridīnī who said: "I was one of them," that is to say, one of the group referred to above, "so I said

to myself: 'There is only one course for me to take. I must stay close to the Shaikh, by day and by night, so that I can watch what he does.' I stayed with him for the rest of that day, and followed him that evening, when he passed through the narrow streets of the bazaar. He picked up seven chunks of bread, then went and knocked at the door of a house.

"An old woman came out and said to him: 'O Qaḍīb al-Bān, you have kept us waiting!' He handed her those chunks of bread, and went on his way, until he reached the City Gate of Mosul. The gate was locked, but it was opened up for him, and I followed along behind him, as he went out of the city. After walking a short distance, he came to a flowing stream, with a tree beside it, so he took off his clothes, and performed the major ritual ablution [*ightasala*]. Then he reached for some clothes that were hanging on the tree, and put them on. He then proceeded to perform the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], until the dawn arose.

"Sleep overwhelmed me, and it was only because of the heat of the sun that I finally woke up. I found myself in a barren desert, with nobody else in sight. Then some riders passed by, so I hailed them and said: 'I am from Mosul.' They refused to believe me at first, then one of them asked me how I came to be there, so I told him my story. 'Between you and Mosul,' he said, 'lies the distance of a six-month journey! You had better stay here, in case he comes to find you.' Then they rode off, and left me there by myself.

"As soon as the night had set in, lo and behold, the Shaikh was right there in front of me. He did what he had done the first time, then he set off walking, and I followed him until we came to Mosul. We joined the people in the dawn prayer [*ṣubḥ*], then he turned to me and tweaked my ear, as he said: 'You must never behave like that again! You must also beware of divulging the secret!' May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

It was the noble Shaikh Abu 'l-Barakāt Ṣakhr ibn Ṣakhr ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said:

"Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān stayed with us at the convent [*zāwiya*] for one whole month, completely absorbed in his spiritual state. He neither ate nor drank, nor did he ever lay his sides upon the ground.

My paternal uncle, Shaikh ‘Adī ibn Musāfir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would come and stand by his head, and he would say to him: ‘Congratulations to you, O Qaḍīb al-Bān! The Divine vision [*ash-shuhūd al-Ilāhī*] has seized you, and the Lordly state of being [*al-wujūd ar-Rabbānī*] has engrossed you.’

“To anyone who came to visit him, my uncle would say: ‘Peace be upon the saint of Allāh, really and truly!’ Then he would point toward Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān. May Allāh be well pleased with them both!

“One day, while he was performing the dawn prayer [*ṣalāt aṣ-ṣubḥ*] behind the prayer leader [*imām*], the Shaikh completed one cycle [*rak‘a*] of it, then stopped short of the second. When I asked him: ‘Why did you not complete your prayer together with the rest of us?’ he said: ‘O Abu ‘l-Barakāt, I became exhausted from running after your prayer leader. He entered the state of consecration [for the Pilgrimage], while he was here, then he traveled to Syria, then to Baghdād, and then to Mecca. When we came to the steepest mountain pass, I was utterly exhausted, so I gave up trying to follow him beyond that point.’

“I went and asked the prayer leader [*imām*] about this, and he said: ‘He has told you the truth. By Allāh, all of that was going on in my imagination, during my performance of the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*].’”

It was ash-Sharīf Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir al-Ḥusainī al-Mawṣilī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said: “I heard my father say: ‘I once heard the Judge [*Qāḍī*] of Mosul (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) say:

““I had formed a bad opinion of Qaḍīb al-Bān, after hearing so much about his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] and revelatory disclosures [*mukāshafāt*]. I had actually decided to tell the Sulṭān to banish him from Mosul, though no one knew what I had in mind, apart from Allāh (Exalted is He). While I was in one of the streets of Mosul, I saw Qaḍīb al-Bān approaching from the other end of the street, walking along in his familiar style. There was nobody else on the street, apart from me and him, so I said to myself: ‘If only I had somebody with me, I would tell him to go and arrest him!’

““At that very moment, he assumed the appearance of a Kurd, and his whole style was different from his former style. Then he took a

step forward, and assumed the appearance of a Bedouin. Then he took another step, and assumed the appearance of a jurist [*faqīh*]. ‘O Judge,’ he said to me, ‘of these four shapes you have just seen, which is Qaḍīb al-Bān? You need to know for sure, so you can tell the Sulṭān to banish him from Mosul!’ I could not restrain myself from bowing down and kissing his hands, and I asked Allāh to forgive him.””

It was Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh Yūnus al-Baiṭār [the Farrier] ad-Dīnasrī who said: “In the early stage of my career, I worked as a farrier in Dīnasr. I had just finished shoeing a mule, when it kicked me on the head with its hoof, and knocked me unconscious. People started talking about my death, and the news reached my mother, who was in Mosul at the time. She went to the Shaikh and said: ‘I have just heard the news of my son’s death,’ but he told her: ‘He has not died. A mule kicked him on the head with its hoof, and knocked him unconscious.’ The fact of the matter was exactly as he told her. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān was once mentioned in the presence of our master and our Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), so he said: “He is a saint [*walī*] drawn near [to the Lord]. He holds a special position in the presence of Allāh (Exalted is He), and has a sure footing with Him.<sup>246</sup> His devotion to Allāh (Exalted is He) is absolutely sincere.”

When someone said: “We do not see him performing the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*],” Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir replied: “He performs the prayer where you cannot see him, without interruption, by day and by night, for it is always an obligatory duty [*farḍ*] as far as he is concerned. I see him clearly, when he prays in Mosul and elsewhere on the horizons of the earth, and he never performs an act of prostration [*sajda*] except at the door of the Ka‘bā!”

Shaikh Qaḍīb al-Bān (may Allāh be well pleased with him) made his home in Mosul, and he dwelt there until he died, around the year

<sup>246</sup> Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was alluding to the words of the Qur’ān:

And bring to those who believe the good tidings  
*wa bashshiri ‘lladhīna āmanū*

that they have a sure footing with their Lord.  
*anna la-hum qadama ṣidqin ‘inda Rabbi-him. (10:2)*

[A.H.] 570. He was buried there, and his tomb is prominent site, to which visits are frequently paid.

There was another man called Qaḍīb al-Bān, but at a later date, and in the regions of the West [*Maghrib*]. May Allāh be well pleased with them both!



### 36. Shaikh ‘Umar ibn Mas‘ūd al-Bazzāz (A.H. 532/3–608)

**A**s for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Abu ‘l-Qāsim ‘Umar ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Abi ‘l-‘Izz al-Bazzāz, he was one of the most notable companions of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in Baghdād. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] and splendid spiritual states. He attracted a stream of visitors, and many people derived great benefit in his fellowship, from which they graduated to the stations of pious abstainers and worshipful servants.

He was dedicated to worshipful service [*‘ibāda*] and earnest spiritual endeavor [*mujāhada*], and he was inwardly and outwardly sound [*salīm al-bāṭin wa ‘ẓ-ẓāhir*]. He had a fine way of speaking about the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*] of the people [of the Lord]. The radiant lights of worshipful obedience glowed upon his face. He was always neat and tidy, and pleasantly perfumed.

When he spoke about love, light would shine through the gaps between his front teeth, and the redness of his cheeks would intensify. When he spoke about fear, on the other hand, his thoughtful composure would fly away, the color of his complexion would alter, and serious concern would almost strangle him.

He took lessons in the Prophetic tradition [*Ḥadīth*] from Abu ‘l-Qāsim Sa‘īd ibn al-Bannā, Abu ‘l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Ḥāfiẓ, ‘Abd al-Awwal ash-Shajarī, and others.

He was handsome in his bearing, pleasant in appearance [*khalq*] and agreeable in character [*khulq*].

The following information about him is supplied by al-Muḥibb ibn Najjār, in his *Ta’rikh* [History]:

“‘Umar ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Abi ‘l-Qāsim al-Bazzāz was one of the most notable companions of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī. He spent a considerable length of time in his fellowship, learned Islāmic juris-

prudence [*fiqh*] from him, and joined him in hearing the Prophetic tradition [*Ḥadīth*] narrated by many authorities on the subject. He modeled himself on the Shaikh's moral qualities [*akhlāq*], adopted his excellent patterns of behavior [*ādāb*], and followed his Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*].

"He owned a shop in Khān aṣ-Ṣuffa, in the Tuesday Bazaar [*Sūq ath-Thalāthā'*], where he sold linen goods [*bazz*] and tried to earn a lawful income. Then he gave that up, and retired to a convent [*zāwiya*] next to his own small mosque [*masjid*], on the western side [of Baghdād], in the vicinity of the large congregational mosque [*jāmi'*] of al-'Aqaba.

"A host of companions and followers attached themselves to him, so his name became widely known, and his fame spread far and wide. People began to seek him out, bringing votive offerings, gifts and donations. He spent all that on the spiritual paupers [*fuqarā'*] in his company. Many of the Caliph's élite mamelukes [*mamālīk*] repented at his hand, and were invested by him with the tattered cloak [*khirqā*]. They mended their ways, and a considerable number of them graduated to the station of pious abstainers and worshipful servants.

"I took notes in his presence, and spent time in his company, on more than one occasion. I heard him deliver lectures, in which he recited poetry to us, spontaneously and from his memory, in his mosque [*masjid*] on the western side of the city. Here are some verses of his:

My God, to You be the praise You rightly deserve,  
for blessings of which I have never been worthy.

The greater my shortcoming, the more You favor me,  
as if by falling short I have a claim on gracious favor!

"Our Shaikh 'Umar al-Bazzāz died on Saturday, the 14th of the month of Ramaḍān, in the year [A.H.] 608. He was born in the year [A.H.] 532 or 533. He was buried in his convent [*zāwiya*] on the western side of the city."

(Here ends this abbreviated excerpt from the historical work referred to above. The author also states that al-Ḥāfiẓ adh-Dhahabī related traditional reports on the authority of the Shaikh.)

## 37. Shaikh Makārim an-Nahr-Khālīṣī

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Makārim ibn Idrīs an-Nahr-Khālīṣī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the most outstanding of all the famous Shaikhs of ‘Irāq, and one of the most remarkable of those who know by direct experience [*‘arīfīn*]. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], splendid spiritual states, supernatural feats, lofty indications, heavenly expressions, magnificent illumination and brilliantly clear disclosure. He was well versed in the stages of spiritual progress. He had a far-reaching grasp of the meanings of direct witnessing, and a firm footing in the resolution of difficult problems.

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) presents in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He granted him freedom of disposal in the universe [*‘ālam*], and established him in control of the spiritual states.

He was renowned for having met a vast number of the Shaikhs, far more than any other member of his generation. His own Shaikh, Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hītī,<sup>247</sup> used to extol his merit, treat him with honor, accord him priority over others, and draw attention to his special virtue. He used to say: “My brother, Shaikh Makārim ibn Idrīs, is a perfectly developed man, but he will not become prominent until after my death.” This prediction, we are told, turned out to be correct.

Responsibility for the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] devolved upon him, in Nahr Khālīṣ and all the surrounding districts of ‘Irāq. His brother’s two sons, ‘Abd al-Mawlā and ‘Abd al-Khālīq, both received their education from him. More than a few became affiliated to him, and his students included a host of the righteous and the Shaikhs.

<sup>247</sup> See pp. 385–91 above.

He had an exquisite way of speaking about Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- The genuine seeker [*murīd ṣādiq*] is one who discovers in his heart the sweetness of nonexistence [*‘adam*], rids himself of agonizing pain [*alam*], and calmly accepts whatever has been destined by the Pen [*Qalam*].

- The spiritual pauper [*faqīr*] is one who patiently endures, who desires very little, and who practices good conduct, so that his character becomes refined. He is vigilantly conscious of his Lord, so he conceals his innermost being [*sirr*]. He fears his Lord (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He), so he disguises his condition, and relies entirely on his Master [*Mawlā*]. He does not complain about his hardship, and he takes refuge with Allāh (Exalted is He), humbly submitting to Him in all his states of being.

- The pious ascetic [*zāhid*] is one who dispenses with comfort, abstains from leadership, restrains the lower self [*nafs*] from carnal appetites and passionate desire, and flees with his innermost being [*sirr*] to the Master [*Mawlā*].

- The spiritual warrior [*mujāhid*] in the cause of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is one who shuns relaxation and embraces reflection, and who makes a constant practice of humility, rectitude, and weary labor. He acts in accordance with reality [*ḥaqīqa*], gives life to sincerity [*ṣafā*], says nothing about the workings of destiny [*qaḍā*], and steers well clear of harmful animosity [*adhā*]. He feels a sense of shame before the Sovereign Most High [*al-Malik al-A‘lā*], and he takes little comfort in worldly fortune. As a substitute for You, O Allāh, worldly fortune will not profit the owner of such fortune [*lā yanfa‘u Allāhumma dha ‘l-jaddi min-ka ‘l-jadd*].

- The vigilant watcher [*murāqib*] is one whose sorrow is prolonged, who constantly maintains his active goodness [*ihsān*], who suppresses his exasperation, and who stands in awe of his Lord (Glory be to Him).

- The sincere devotee [*mukhlīṣ*] is one who escapes from creatures through His mercy, who detaches his innermost being [*sirr*] from existing entities, and who takes as his model the Chieftain of Humankind [*Sayyid al-Bariyyāt*].<sup>248</sup>

<sup>248</sup> In other words, he follows the exemplary conduct of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

• The truly thankful person [*shākir*] is one who is patient with the All-Knowing Sovereign [*al-Malik al-‘Allām*] in the face of need, who does not have recourse to anyone among the privileged élite or the common folk, and whose heart is devoid of worldly planning and concern.

Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan al-Jawsaqī has told us: “I was in his presence, on one occasion, while he was speaking about ardent yearning and love. He said: ‘When the innermost beings [*asrār*] of lovers are stunned by the appearance of the Sultān of Awe and Majesty, all their lights are extinguished. Every light is blown out by their gasping breaths.’ Then he breathed a deep sigh, and out went all the lamps in the mosque where he was speaking. There were thirty odd lanterns in the building, and every one of them was extinguished.

“He kept silent for a while, then he said: ‘When their innermost beings [*asrār*] are revived by the appearance of the lights of intimate friendship and lawful food, their lights dispel every darkness, as they are kindled by their happy sighs. Then he took another deep breath, and the lanterns were all lit, just as they had been at the outset.

“One day, he was talking to his companions about Hell [*Jahannam*], and the torment that Allāh (Exalted is He) has prepared for its inhabitants. Their hearts were quaking, and tears were streaming from their eyes, but one skeptic [*mu‘aṭṭil*] said to himself: ‘This is just a scare tactic. There is no Fire in which anyone is doomed to suffer torment.’ It was then that the Shaikh recited the words of the Qur’ān:

And if a whiff of your Lord’s torment

*wa la-in massat-hum nafḥatun*

were to touch them, they would surely say:

*min ‘adhābi Rabbi-ka la-yaqūlunna*

“Alas for us! We were wrongdoers.”

*yā-waila-nā innā kunnā ḡālimīn. (21:46)*

“The Shaikh fell silent, and no one in his audience said a word, apart from that man. He shouted: ‘Help! Help! [*al-ghawth—al-ghawth*],’ and became extremely agitated. A plume of smoke was seen to emerge from his nose, and anyone who caught a whiff of its horrid stench was almost thrown into an epileptic fit.

“Then the Shaikh recited:

Our Lord, relieve us of the torment!  
*Rabba-na 'kshif 'an-na 'l-'adhāba*  
 We are truly believers.  
*innā mu'minūn. (44:12)*<sup>249</sup>

“The man’s feelings became calm, and he went and kissed the Shaikh’s feet. He renewed his commitment to Islām, and reaffirmed his belief. He said: ‘I experienced in my heart an incandescence and a gust of fire, that almost took my breath away. I was almost suffocated to death by the smoke and stench that arose inside me. I heard a voice saying:

This is the Fire [of Hell] which you  
*hādhihi 'n-nāru 'llatī*  
 were in the habit of denying!  
*kuntum bi-hā tukadhdhibūn.*  
 Is this magic,  
*a-fa siḥrun hādhā*  
 or do you not see?  
*am antum lā tubṣirūn. (52:14,15)*

“But for the blessed grace of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), I would surely have perished.”

It was Abu 'l-Majd al-Mubārak ibn Aḥmad who said: “Once, when I was in the presence of the Shaikh, the notion occurred to me: ‘If only I could see some demonstration of his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]!’ He turned to me there and then, and said to me with a smile: ‘Five individuals are about to enter our presence.’ He went on to describe them in detail, telling me what would happen to them, how long their lives would last, and the kinds of things they fancied. Everything he said turned out to be perfectly true.”

Shaikh Makārim (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in a small town by the river called an-Nahr al-Khālīṣī. The town became well known, because of him, in all the lands of ‘Irāq. It was there that he died, as a very old man, and his tomb is a local landmark, to which many visits are paid. His fame is appropriately celebrated in the region where he lived. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!

<sup>249</sup> This Qur’ānic verse [*āya*] was highly appropriate to the occasion, since it occurs in *Sūrat ad-Dukhān* [the Sūra of Smoke].

## 38. Shaikh Khalīfa an-Nahr-Malikī

**A**s for that exemplary guide, the righteous Shaikh Khalīfa ibn Mūsā an-Nahr-Malikī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the preeminent Shaikhs of ‘Irāq, and one of the most noble of those who know by direct experience [*‘ārifīn*]. He was endowed with splendid spiritual stations, obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], radiant insights, and brilliant realizations. He held a position of precedence in the degrees of Divine elucidation [*al-faḥ al-Ilāhī*], and a comprehensive grasp of Lordly illumination [*al-kashf ar-Rabbānī*].

He was one of the pillars of this Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīqa*], and one of its leaders and chieftains, in respect of knowledge, practice, and spiritual state. Responsibility for the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] devolved upon him, in his day and age, in his own town and all the neighboring districts. Of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, more than a few received their education from him. Many of the righteous became affiliated to him, and derived great benefit from his words. He attracted a stream of visitors, who often brought him votive offerings.

He was handsome in his attributes, noble in his traits of character, extremely intelligent, committed to following the Sunna, and full of respect for the masters of knowledge [*arbāb al-‘ilm*]. He had a fine way of speaking, in the language of experts in the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- The last step of the pious abstainers [*ṣāhidīn*] is the first step of those who put all their trust in the Lord [*mutawakkilīn*].
- Everything has a distinguishing mark, and the mark of utter disappointment [*khadhlān*] is the absence of weeping from a sorrowful heart.
- If someone seeks to gain access to Allāh through self-destruction, Allāh will make Himself inaccessible to him.

- The most meritorious of all deeds are noncompliance with the lower self [*nafs*] and contentment with the workings of destiny [*qadar*].

- When fear makes its home in the valley of the heart, it burns out carnal desires.

- Everything has an opposite, and the opposite of the light of the heart is fullness of the belly.

- If a seeker demonstrates detached commitment to Allāh (Exalted is He), he will reach his destination and obtain what he seeks.

- If truthfulness [*ṣidq*] is someone's *modus operandi*, Allāh (Exalted is He) will be well pleased with him.

- Certainty is fear [*al-yaqīn huwa 'l-khawf*].

- The strongest connection between the servant and Allāh consists in settling accounts with cautious restraint [*muḥāsaba bi-wara'*], exercising vigilance with understanding and courtesy [*murāqaba bi-ʿilm wa adab*], and following the rules without passion [*ittibā' bi-lā hawā*].

- Whatever distracts you from Allāh (Exalted is He)—such as property, relatives and children—is a grave misfortune for you.

- Any work performed by the servant [of the Lord], for which there is no spiritual reward in this world, will have no recompense in the Hereafter.

- When the servant [of the Lord] is hungry or thirsty, he acquires clarity. When he eats and drinks his fill, he loses his sight.

- Satisfaction with contentment [*riḍā*] is the degree of pious restraint [*wara'*].

- If someone wears a simple woolen cloak [*'abā'a*], which only cost him three dirhams [silver coins], while his heart is set on a more expensive item, his inner being [*bāṭin*] is in conflict with his outer self [*ẓāhir*]. Once there is no lingering desire in his heart, it becomes permissible for him to dress in the humble style of the pious ascetics [*ẓuhhād*].

- If you hear the sound of whispering [*waswās*], ask for it to be removed from you, for whispering is sometimes a delight to the Devil [*Shaiṭān*].

It was Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Qurashī who said: “I once heard our own Shaikh, Abū Sa‘īd al-Qailawī,<sup>250</sup> say:

“I alighted in one of the stations of the affirmation of Divine Oneness [*tawḥīd*]. Before had I settled down in it, however, my right to be there was contested by one of the challenges presented by its rules. I could not solve the problem, and I had no idea what was required of me. I therefore appealed to the spirit of Shaikh Khalifa for help. My aspiration [*himma*] then became identified with his aspiration, and my spirit merged with his spirit. I was thus enabled to cut through those challenges and overcome those obstacles, and all the principles involved were disclosed to me.

“Of all my companions, Shaikh Khalifa is the one with the loftiest aspiration, the strongest sense of fear [of the Lord], and the sharpest perception. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan went on to say: “I asked Shaikh Khalifa about that experience related by Shaikh Abū Sa‘īd, and he said: ‘O my brother, when he brought my aspiration in contact with his aspiration, and attracted my innermost being [*sirr*] to his innermost being, a door was forced open for me in my spiritual states, in a manner beyond my personal capacity. Whenever something connected with the world of the Unseen [*Ghaib*] proves difficult for me, or I am puzzled by some mystery in the degrees of ascending progress, I always have recourse to that masterful teacher [*ustādh*]. I turn again to that force of attraction [*jadhba*], so that every difficulty becomes easy for me, and every door is opened up for me. May Allāh be well pleased with him!’”

It was Ibn Qūtā who said: “I heard this report from one of our righteous companions (may Allāh be well pleased with him), an inhabitant of Baghdād. He told me:

“I woke up one night, not long before dawn, and made a solemn pledge to Allāh (Exalted is He). I vowed that I would sit in the congregational mosque [*jāmi‘*] of ar-Ruṣāfa, putting all my trust in Him, and making sure that none of my fellow creatures would notice me. I went directly to that congregational mosque, and sat there for three days, during which I saw no one, and had no food to eat. My hunger became intense, and I feared that I might collapse. I resisted

<sup>250</sup> See pp. 441–44 above.

the urge to go outside, though I was longing for some hot grilled meat, wheat bread, and sweet dried dates of the finest quality.

“While I was in that state, the wall of the prayer-niche [*miḥrāb*] suddenly split open, and through the gap came a man. His appearance was that of the people from the countryside [*ahl as-Sawād*]. He held a wrapper in his hand, and he set it down in front of me. He said to me: “Shaikh Khalīfa wishes to tell you: ‘Eat as much as you fancy, and go out from here, for you are one of the lords of the stations of absolute trust [*arbāb maqāmāt at-tawakkul*].’” Then he disappeared from my sight. I opened the wrapper, and found that it contained the very food I was longing for, so I ate my fill.

“Then I went outside, and came to Shaikh Khalīfa in Nahr al-Malik. As soon as he saw me, the first thing he said to me was: “Hey, you there! It is not appropriate for a man to sit still, putting all his trust in the Lord, until he has established his foundation in detachment from creatures, both inwardly and outwardly [*bāṭinan wa ṣāhīran*]. Nor must he be sinfully disobedient in the forsaking of material means [*asbāb*].” May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

“Shaikh Khalīfa (may Allāh be well pleased with him) came originally from a village called Qaryat al-A‘rāb, which is one of the villages of Nahr al-Malik [King’s River]. He settled (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in Nahr al-Malik, and made his home there until he died, at a very advanced age. His tomb is a local landmark, to which visits are frequently paid.

“When his death was near at hand, he pronounced the testimony of faith [*tashahhada*],<sup>251</sup> while his face was aglow with happiness and good cheer. He also said: “Here is Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and here are his Companions (may Allāh be well pleased with them all)! They are giving me the good tidings of approval from Allāh (Exalted is He), and His blessing.” Then he went on to say: “Here are the angels (peace be upon them), ready to speed me to the encounter with a Noble Lord [*Rabb Karīm*]. Then he chuckled and said: “When the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He) reveals Himself to the believing servant, at the

<sup>251</sup> In Arabic, the verb *tashahhada* is all that is required to convey the meaning: “He said: ‘I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh [*ashhadu an lā ilāha illa ‘llāh*], and I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh [*wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadar Rasūlu ‘llāh*].’”

moment of seizing his spirit, the servant is filled with joyful happiness.” Then he recited His words (Exalted is He):

O soul now at peace,  
*yā ayyatuha 'n-nafsu 'l-muṭma'inna:*  
 return unto your Lord,  
*irji'ī ilā Rabbi-ki*  
 well pleased, well pleasing!  
*rāḍiyatan marḍiyya.* (89:27,28)

“He went on reciting until he died. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

Ibn Qūtā also said: “There was another Shaikh called Shaikh Khalifa, in Ya‘qūbā. He was one of the companions of Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs<sup>252</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and he died before his Shaikh. He was buried in Ya‘qūbā. Whenever Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs experienced a spiritual state, he would exclaim: ‘O my Lord!’ and al-Khalifa would do likewise.”

This other Shaikh Khalifa is of a later date than the one we have just been discussing here. May Allāh be well pleased with them, and may He be well pleased with us, on their account!



<sup>252</sup> See p. 527 below.

### 39.

## Shaikh Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad al-Qurashī (d. A.H. 599)

As for that exemplary guide, the righteous Shaikh Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the most distinguished of the famous Shaikhs of Egypt, one of the greatest of those who know by direct experience [‘*ārifīn*], and one of the noblest of those who specialize in Reality [*muḥaqqiqīn*].

He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], splendid spiritual states, supernatural feats, truthful utterances, spiritually inspired indications, sacred encounters, heavenly aspirations, sublime stations, lofty situations, brilliant insights, Lordly realizations, and esoteric forms of knowledge. He held the loftiest peak of the stages of nearness, and the highest rank on the thrones of holiness. He had a firm footing in practical disposition, and great strength in effective control.

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has presented in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He granted him freedom of management in the universe [‘*ālam*], manifested wondrous marvels at his hands, made him utter words of wisdom, and caused useful lessons to flow upon his tongue. He filled the hearts of His servants with love for him, and instilled profound respect for him in their breasts.

The Shaikh was a noble Hāshimite, of the tribe of Quraish. Sainthood [*wilāya*] was clearly apparent in his impressive bearing, his awesome dignity, and his calm tranquillity. No one who ever saw him could turn his eyes away from him. When he passed through the market, voices were subdued and movements stilled, as he became the center of everyone’s attention.

He joined the fellowship of several Shaikhs of the West [*Maghrib*] and of Egypt, and witnessed many of their charismatic talents [*karāmāt*]. The leadership of this [spiritual] business devolved upon him, in his own time, and he became responsible for the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] in Egypt. More than a few of the principal scholars [*‘ulamā’*] received their education from him, including:

- The Chief Justice [*Qāḍi ‘l-Qudāt*] ‘Imād ad-Dīn ibn as-Sukkari
- The erudite Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn ibn Abi ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī, commonly known as Ibn al-Ḥumair
- Shaikh Abū Ḥāhir Muḥammad al-Anṣārī al-Khaṭīb
- Shaikh Abu ‘l-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Anṣārī al-Qaṣṭalānī [the Castilian].

Of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, more than a few became his students. A considerable number of scholars and spiritual paupers [*fuqarā’*] became affiliated to him. They derived great benefit from his teaching and his fellowship, and he attracted a stream of visitors. He was graceful, handsome, noble, generous, courteous, and modest to the point of humility in his dealings with the people of knowledge.

He was afflicted with elephantiasis [*judhām*], and was seriously impaired, some time before his death.

He had a beautiful way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the realities [*ahl al-ḥaqā’iq*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- You must always observe well-mannered behavior [*adab*] in worshipful servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*], and never object to anything, for if He considers you worthy, He will bring you in contact with Him.

- If someone has no standing in absolute trust [*tawakkul*], he is deficient.

- You must turn toward this *Qibla* [direction of ritual prayer], for nothing is bestowed upon anyone except from it.

- It is not appropriate for the Shaikh to instruct the seeker [*murīd*] to forsake his material means [*asbāb*], unless he is capable of strict compliance with his Shaikh’s authority.

He used to offer this prayer of supplication [*du'ā'*]:

O Allāh, bless us  
*Allāhumma 'mnun 'alai-nā*  
 with the clarity of direct knowledge,  
*bi-ṣafā'i 'l-ma'rifati*  
 and grant us the correct behavior  
*wa hab la-nā ṣaḥīḥa 'l-mu'āmalati*  
 in relations between us and You.  
*fī-mā baina-nā wa baina-ka*  
 And endow us with genuine trust in You,  
*wa 'rzuq-nā ṣidqa 't-tawakkuli 'alai-ka*  
 and with a good opinion of You.  
*wa ḥusna 'z-zanni bi-ka*  
 And bless us with everything  
*wa 'mnun 'alai-nā bi-kulli*  
 that brings us near to You,  
*mā yuqarribu-nā ilai-ka*  
 combined with benefits in the Two Abodes,<sup>253</sup>  
*maqrūnan bi'l-'awāfi fī 'd-dāraini*  
 O Most Merciful of the merciful!  
*yā Arḥama 'r-rāḥimīn.*

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has told us: "I entered the presence of Shaikh Abū 'Abdi'llāh al-Maghāwirī, on a certain day, and he said to me: 'O noble one [*yā sharīf*], shall I teach you something to which you can turn for help, whenever you are in some kind of need?' 'Yes, of course!' said I, so he told me to say:

O Self-Sufficient One!<sup>254</sup> O Generous One!  
*yā Wājidu yā Jawād:*  
 Blow upon us, from You, a breath of goodness.  
*infah-nā min-ka bi-nafḥati khair.*  
 You are indeed Capable of all things.<sup>255</sup>  
*inna-ka 'alā kulli shai'in Qadīr.*

<sup>253</sup> That is to say, in this world and in the Hereafter.

<sup>254</sup> The literal meaning of the Divine Name *Wājid* is "Finder." This is taken to mean that Allāh (Exalted is He) finds whatever He wishes, whenever He wishes, and is therefore entirely Self-Sufficient.

<sup>255</sup> The sentence: "You are indeed Capable of all things [*inna-ka 'alā kulli shai'in Qadīr*]." occurs in Q. 22:8.

The Shaikh added: "I have benefited from it ever since I first heard it."

The following report is provided by that highly erudite scholar, al-Kamāl ad-Damīrī (may Allāh encompass him with His mercy), in his book entitled *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* [The Life of Living Creatures]. In the chapter headed by the Arabic letter *shīn*, he states:

"Our Shaikh, the enlightened Imām Abū 'Abdī'llāh ibn As'ad al-Yāfi'i (may Allāh be well pleased with him), has informed me: 'It has reached me, on the authority of our master, the enlightened Imām Abū 'Abdī'llāh al-Qurashī, on the authority of his Shaikh, Abu 'r-Rabī' al-Māliqī, that the latter once said:

""Shall I teach you something precious, from which you can always derive benefit, and which will never be exhausted?" [Shaikh Abū 'Abdī'llāh said]: "Yes, of course!" said I, so he told me to say:

O Allāh! O Unique One! O Originator!  
yā Allāhu yā Wāḥidu yā Mūjidu

O Generous One! O Expander! O Noble One!  
yā Jawādu yā Bāsītu yā Karīmu

O Ever-Giving One! O Lord of Might!  
yā Wahhābu yā Dha't-Ṭawli

O Self-Sufficing One! O Enricher! O Opener!  
yā Ḡhaniyyu yā Muḡhnī yā Fattāḡu

O Provider! O All-Knowing One!  
yā Razzāqu yā 'Alīmu

O Ever-Living One! O Eternally Self-Sustaining One!  
yā Ḥayyu yā Qayyūmu

O All-Merciful One! O All-Compassionate One!  
yā Raḡmānu yā Raḡīmu

O Creator of the heavens and the earth!  
yā Badī'a 's-samāwāti wa 'l-ardī

O Lord of Majesty and Honor!  
yā Dha'l-Jalāli wa 'l-Ikrāmi

O Tender One! O Beneficent One!  
yā Ḥannānu yā Mannān:

Blow upon me, from You, a breath of goodness,  
infāḡ-nī min-ka bi-nafḡati khairin

with which You will make me independent  
tughnī-nī bi-hā

of everyone apart from You.  
'amman siwā-ka

If you sought a victory, now has the victory come to you.  
*in tastaftihū fa-qad jā'a-kumu 'l-faṭḥ.* (8:19)

We have surely given you a clear victory.  
*innā fatahnā la-ka faṭḥan mubīnā.* (48:1)

Help from Allāh and a victory near at hand.  
*naṣrun mina 'llāhi wa faṭḥun qarīb.* (61:13)

O Allāh! O Self-Sufficing One! O Praiseworthy One!  
*Allāhumma yā Ḡhaniyyu yā Ḥamīdu*

O Initiator! O Restorer! O Ever-Loving One!  
*yā Mubdi'u yā Mu'idu yā Wadūdu*

O Lord of the Glorious Throne!  
*yā Dha'l-'Arshi 'l-Majīd:*

O Doer of whatever He wishes!  
*yā Fā'īlan li-mā yurīd.*

Suffice me with Your lawful sustenance,  
*ikfi-nī bi-ḥalālī-ka*

to the exclusion of what is in unlawful in Your sight.  
*'an ḥarāmi-ka*

And make me independent, by Your grace,  
*wa aghni-nī bi-faḍli-ka*

from everyone apart from You.  
*'amman siwā-ka*

And protect me with that  
*wa 'ḥfaẓ-nī bi-mā*

with which You protected the Reminder.  
*ḥafiẓta bi-hi 'dh-Dhikra*

And help me with that  
*wa 'nṣur-nī bi-mā*

with which You helped the Messengers.  
*naṣarta bi-hi 'r-Rusul.*

You are indeed Capable of all things.<sup>256</sup>  
*inna-ka 'alā kulli shai'in Qadīr.*

“““He said: ‘If someone makes a regular practice of reciting this, after every ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], especially the Friday congregational prayer [*jum'a*], Allāh will keep him safe from every cause of fear. He will help him against his enemies, enrich him, and provide him with sustenance from sources he could never have imagined. Allāh will make his life easy for him, and He will settle his debt for him. Even if he owes a debt as big as the mountains, Allāh will discharge it for him, through His gracious favor and His noble generosity.’””

<sup>256</sup> See note 255 on p. 511 above.

(This brings us to the end of the quotation.)

It was Shaikh Abu 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Qaṣṭalānī who said: "I once heard Shaikh Muḥammad al-Qurashī say:

"I was in the presence of Shaikh Ibrāhīm ibn Ṣarīf, when someone asked him: "Is it permissible for a person to impose a binding obligation on himself, which cannot be fulfilled unless he obtains what he is seeking?" "Yes," said the Shaikh, and he offered in evidence the traditional report [*ḥadīth*] of Abū Lubāba,<sup>257</sup> in the story of the tribe of Banī Naḍir. He cited the saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

If he had come to me, I would surely have begged for forgiveness on his behalf, but since he has done that to himself, leave him alone, until Allāh passes judgment on him.

"When I heard that, I vowed to myself that I would not accept any food or drink, except through a manifestation of [divine] power [*qudra*]. Three days later, while I was sitting on the chair, busy with my work in the shop, a figure appeared before me. He was holding a flask in his hand, and there was something inside it. 'Wait patiently,' he told me, 'until the time of the evening prayer [*ishā'*], and you can have some of this to eat.' Then he disappeared from my sight.

"While I was engaged in reciting my litany [*wird*], between the two evening prayers [*ishā'ain*],<sup>258</sup> the wall suddenly split open.

<sup>257</sup> According to traditional report, it was concerning Abū Lubāba that Allāh (Exalted is He) sent down the verse [*āya*] of the Qur'ān:

O you who believe, do not betray Allāh and the Messenger,  
*yā ayyuha 'lladhīna āmanū lā takhūnu 'llāha wa 'r-Rasūla*

nor knowingly betray your trusts.  
*wa takhūnū amānāti-kum wa antum ta'lamūn.* (8:27)

Abū Lubāba mishandled a mission assigned to him by the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). When he realized that he was guilty of betrayal, he tied himself to a pillar in the mosque, saying: "I will not leave this place until Allāh forgives me for what I have done." When the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) heard about this, he uttered the words quoted in the text above. Umm Salama heard him laughing at dawn, so she asked him why, and he explained: "Abū Lubāba has been forgiven!"

(For a full account of the episode, see: A. Guillaume. *The Life of Muhammad*. A translation of Ishāq's *Sirat Rasūl Allāh*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1967; pp. 462–63.)

<sup>258</sup> That is to say, between the sunset prayer [*ṣalāt al-maghrib*] and the late evening prayer [*ṣalāt al-‘ishā'*].

A maiden of Paradise [*ḥawrā'*] appeared before me, holding that same flask in her hand. There was something inside it, which looked like honey. She approached me, and gave me three licks of it. I was stupefied, and my consciousness departed, but I eventually came to my senses. Since then, no food has ever tasted so delightful to me, and I have never seen such a beautiful woman. For quite some time, I could not bear the sound of ordinary people.'

He also said: "I heard Shaikh Abū 'Abdi'llāh al-Qurashī say: 'Once, while I was at Minā,<sup>259</sup> I became very thirsty, so I came to a well, and asked someone standing there for some water, in a small copper pot [*rakwa*]. He punched me, snatched the pot, and threw it away. Then, lo and behold, it was lying in a pond of sweet water, so I drank my fill. I also told my companions about it, and they came looking, but they could not find it anywhere.'"

He also said: "I heard him say: 'I was aboard a ship near Jidda [a port on the Red Sea], together with a companion of mine. He became very thirsty, so I asked if anyone would give us something to drink, in exchange for a shawl I was wearing, and which was the only outer garment I had on me. Nobody would make the deal, so I said to my companion: "Take this shawl, and go and find the captain of the ship." He promptly went to find the captain, taking a small copper pot along with him [as well as the shawl]. As soon as he reached him, the captain scolded him, snatched the copper pot from his hand, and tossed it aside.

"My companion picked it up, and came back to me, obviously downcast and disappointed. I took the copper pot from him, and filled it with water from the sea. He drank until his thirst was quenched, then I took it from him, and drank until my own thirst was quenched. There was a person by my side, one of those who had no water with them, and he also took a drink. Then I filled it a second time, and we soaked flour in the water. When we had satisfied our immediate needs, I filled the pot yet again, but I found the water salty. This made me realize that, when the need is genuine, the substances of nature are transformed.' May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

He also said: "I heard him say: 'One day, as I passed by a vineyard, I heard a wailing sound emanating from one of the baskets of grapes.

<sup>259</sup> Minā is one of the sites of Pilgrimage [*Hajj*], near Mecca.

I retraced my steps, until I came to a halt by the basket. It was being offered for sale, by a man who used to press wine, and who had stuffed it with more than its normal quantity. I agreed to buy it, at its overloaded price, but I had nothing with me, so I took off my shirt and gave it in payment. I thereby rescued the basket of grapes from the hand of the wine-presser, and its plaintive wailing ceased, as soon I purchased it.”

Shaikh Muḥammad al-Qurashī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: “In the early stage of my career, I used to buy flour, and distribute it to anyone who asked me for it, along the road to my house. Then I would weigh it, and I always found it just as I had acquired it.”

On one occasion, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had bought some flour for a dirham [silver coin]. A beggar approached him, so he gave it all to him. Then he walked on, and discovered that his hand was clenched. He opened it, and found a dirham in it, so he used the silver coin to buy some more flour. Then he returned to his home. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

One of his companions had a child, who used to cry so loudly that no one could get to sleep, for a period of four years. He finally brought him to the Shaikh, who said: “O Yūsuf, do not cry tonight!” The child never cried again, after that.

When Shaikh Muḥammad al-Qurashī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) got married, he overheard one mysterious figure saying to another: “So-and-so here has taken a wife, and his spiritual state is bound to alter, as you will see.” Throughout that year, he bought no food and stored no provisions, and during that year he discovered blessed grace and many benefits.

He said (may Allāh be well pleased with him): “I used to have sexual intercourse for three nights, then wait patiently till the fortieth. It did not suit me to have more than that, as a matter of preference, for I was designed to make do with little of everything. I was never interested in heavy eating and drinking, nor in filling my wardrobe. I would go for as long as a year, wearing nothing but the rags of a loose woolen gown [*jubba*], which I kept patched together, to ensure that my private parts would not be exposed. While I was

in Mecca, I was carrying a pastry stuffed with figs. When I cut it open, lice came swarming out of it, giving me a very nasty shock.”

It was al-Qaṣṭalānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: “His hand never stuck to anything he held, and his eyes always looked away. I used to put the razor in his hand, and fix it between his fingers, for I would otherwise find both the hair and the razor discarded. I used to regard this as part of his charisma [*karāma*]. May Allāh be well pleased with him!”

He also said: “Shaikh Abu 'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ath-Thawrī once told me that the Shaikh left two footprints on the earth, one of them of gold and the other of silver.”

He also said: “I once heard him say: ‘While I was traveling on one of the shores, a certain herb [*ḥashīsh*] addressed me, saying: “I am the cure for your sickness,” but I did not pick it up, and I did not make use of it.’ When I said to him: ‘O my master, was it somewhere in the lands of Egypt?’ he replied: ‘I did not see it. If I had seen it, I would surely have recognized it.’

“One of his companions entered his presence, one day, and found him staring into space, while his body was as white as silver. He said: ‘Allāh (Exalted is He) has clothed me with the two robes of well-being and affliction, and He has put them both at my disposal.’ Then he dressed himself in a gown that was hanging there, and returned to his ordinary state.

“Whenever he approached his wife, she would notice that he was staring into space, and that his body was as white as silver.

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once saw a vision, in which the Resurrection [*Qiyāma*] had arrived, and a banner had been affixed to the people of trial and tribulation. Their leader was Job [*Ayyūb*] (peace be upon him), and on his head there was a banner, with the inscription ‘Job [*Ayyūb*].’

“It is related of him that, on one occasion, he dined with King al-Kāmil and the Viceroy, eating from a bowl containing milk. The Viceroy could not enjoy his meal in comfort, on account of the Shaikh’s affliction [with elephantiasis], so the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) told him: ‘If you find it impossible to eat with me, because of this afflicted hand of mine, join me in eating with this

other hand.' He then drew out [from his sleeve] his hand that was as white as silver, and that was unaffected by disease.

"Shaikh Muḥammad al-Qurashī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in [the countryside of] Egypt, and also he stayed for some time in the city of Cairo. Then he traveled to Jerusalem [*Bait al-Maqdis*], where he died on the 6th of Dhu 'l-Ḥijja, in the year [A.H.] 599. He was buried in Ma'mallā, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and his tomb is a local landmark, to which visits are frequently paid. May Allāh be well pleased with him!"

In his work entitled "History To Rely On for Accounts of the Bygone" [*at-Ta'rikh al-mu'tabar fi anba' man ghabar*], Mujir ad-Dīn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-'Ulaimī al-Ḥanbalī al-Maqdisī has informed us:

"He was buried on the western outskirts of the noble city of Jerusalem [*al-Quds*], in a cemetery called Māmallā, by the side of Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Arslān. Many of the eminent figures of Jerusalem, its scholars and its righteous people, have since been buried around him.

"He came originally (may Allāh be well pleased with him) from Algeiras in Spain [*Andalus*], which is a city across the straits [of Gibraltar] from Ceuta [*Sabta*]. He died at the age of fifty-five.

"It is related of him that, if a person is afraid of indigestion [*tukhama*] due to overeating, he should say, after the table is cleared and he has finished eating: 'Abū 'Abdi'llāh al-Qurashī says: 'Today is the Day of the Festival [*'Īd*].' He will then be spared the agony of indigestion.

"It is also said that a prayer of supplication [*du'ā'*], offered at his tomb, is sure to be answered. This has been proven by the test of experience.

"As for Māmallā, the name of the cemetery, it may be derived from *milla* [religious community], though some say it is a corruption of *Ma'manu'llāh* [Sanctuary of Allāh], and others say it is a corruption of *Bābu'llāh* [Gate of Allāh]."

(Here ends this abbreviated excerpt from the work of Mujir ad-Dīn. May Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him!)

In the book entitled *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* [The Life of Living Creatures], by al-Kamāl ad-Damirī, we read:

“A useful piece of advice [*fā’ida*]: One of the enlightened scholars has mentioned that, if a person has eaten too much, and is afraid of indigestion, he should say, while rubbing his stomach: ‘Tonight is the Night of the Festival [*‘Īd*]. May Allāh be well pleased with my master, Abū ‘Abdi’llāh al-Qurashī.’ If he does that three times, he will be spared the ill effects of overeating. Experience has proven this to be amazingly effective.” (Here ends the quotation.)

May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, and may He be well pleased with him!



## 40. Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-A‘zab (d. A.H. 609)

As for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Abū Ishāq ibn ‘Alī, surnamed al-A‘zab [the Bachelor], he was one of the most outstanding Shaikhs of al-Baṭā’ih,<sup>260</sup> one of the beacons of those who know by direct experience [‘*ārifīn*], and one of the foremost of those who specialize in Reality [*muḥaqqiqīn*]. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], splendid spiritual states, sublime realizations, esoteric forms of knowledge, luminous understandings, authentic elucidation, brilliant disclosure, and far-reaching capability.

He was also endowed with clarification of the real meanings of the signs [*ḥaqā’iq al-āyāt*], supernatural vision of the brides of the transcendental realms [‘*arā’is al-mughayyabāt*], the high seat in the presence of holiness [*ḥaḍrat al-quds*], the elevated station amid the couches of intimate friendship [*arā’ik al-uns*], the ability to ride on the back of Dominion [*Malakūt*] to the realm of Sovereignty [*Jabarūt*], and the means of ascension to the presence of direct perception [*ḥaḍrat ash-shuhūd*]. He was extremely well versed in the interpretation of visionary experiences, and in the skills of contentious debate.

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has presented in high profile to the realm of existence [*wujūd*], for He granted him freedom of management in the universe [*kawn*], disrupted the customary patterns of nature for his benefit, caused words of wisdom to flow upon his tongue, established him in control of the spiritual states in the ultimate stage of development [*nihāya*], made him privy to the secrets of sainthood [*wilāya*], and appointed him as a proof [*ḥujja*] and an exemplary guide [*qudwā*].

<sup>260</sup> See note 163 on p. 343 above.

He was one of the pillars of this [spiritual] business, in the spheres of knowledge and practice [*ilm wa 'amal*], pious abstinence [*zuhd*], leadership [*riyāsa*], real achievement [*taḥqīq*] and sublimity [*jalāla*].

He joined the fellowship of his maternal uncle, the great master, Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Abi 'l-Ḥasan ar-Rifā'i<sup>261</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him), from whom he acquired the knowledge of the Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīq*], and from whom he obtained his diploma. He met many of the Shaikhs of 'Irāq, and the leadership of this [spiritual] business in al-Baṭā'ih devolved upon him, in his day and age.

More than a few of the people of al-Baṭā'ih, and of other regions, received their education in his fellowship, and many of the notables became affiliated to him. A considerable number of religious scholars [*ulama'*] attended his classes, and a whole community of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] assembled in his presence, deriving great benefit from his teaching and his fellowship.

He was handsome, generous, graceful, extremely humble and modest, highly intelligent, and very refined in his behavior. He treated the learned with affection, and the devoutly religious with honor and respect. He belonged to the Shāfi'i school [*madhhab*] of Islāmic jurisprudence. He used to dress in the academic costume of the scholars, and hold debates with his colleagues.

He had an exquisite way of speaking, in the language of those who are skilled in the esoteric sciences [*ma'ārif*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- Perception of the roots comes through practicing the branches [*ru'yat al-uṣūl bi-'sti'māl al-furū'*].

- There is no way to direct witnessing of the roots, except through respectful attention to the means [*wasā'it*] and branches, to which Allāh (Exalted is He) has attached such great importance.

- Your remembrance [*dhikr*] is an intermediary [*mutawassit*] for you, until your remembrance becomes connected with His remembrance.

- Whenever a novelty [*ḥadath*] comes in contact with infinite preexistence [*qidam*], the novelty is annihilated, and only the root [*aṣl*] remains.

- Selfless dedication to pursuit of the beacon of detachment [*inqiṭā'*] is a means of connection [*wasīla*].

<sup>261</sup> See pp. 363–68 above.

- Recourse to flight from the beacon of sins is a connecting link [*ṣila*].
- Relaxation in the place of intimate friendship [*uns*] is a glorious honor [*‘izza*].
- If someone is accorded the vision of falsehood, he is shattered [*quṣim*], and if someone is accorded the vision of the Truth, he is protected [*‘uṣim*].

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would often quote these verses of poetry:

The clouds of estrangement have cleared from the moon of love,  
and from the gloom of absence the light of love has shone.

The sweet breeze of connection has really and truly arrived,  
and from the heart it has been greeted with a fine reception.

Into the garden of contentment the waters of union have streamed,  
so affectionate feeling is trembling like the moist and tender bough.

Due to the delight of union and its beauty, it could not be known  
whether we were in a garden there, or in a desert waste.

O You whose love has taken my mind captive, You have left me  
wondering about the difference between captivation and conceit!

Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-A‘zab (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was constantly devoted to vigilant awareness [*murāqaba*]. He was extremely humble, and his gaze was always lowered in modesty. He never raised his head for anyone, except in cases of emergency. In all of forty years, he never raised his head toward the sky above, due to his sense of shame before Allāh (Exalted is He). Lions used to snuggle their faces against his feet.

It was the noble and enlightened Shaikh Aḥmad ibn Abi ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Baṭā’ihī who said: “I once saw my brother, Shaikh Ibrāhīm, sleeping in the porch on a fiercely hot summer day. An enormous snake was coiled next to his head, and it was fanning him with a tortoise shell, held in its mouth.”

He also said: “On one occasion, I saw that a man had come to visit him, accompanied by a youngster. ‘This is my son,’ he said, ‘the rascal who goes to inordinate lengths in disobeying me.’ The Shaikh raised his head, and stared at that youth, who ripped his own clothes, and became disordered in his breathing and his senses. He withdrew to the canyon [*baṭīḥa*], where he stayed gazing at the sky, with only

the lions for company, and neither ate nor drank for forty days.

“Then the man came to the Shaikh again, and complained about the bad condition of his son. The Shaikh gave him a tattered cloak [*khirqā*], and said to him: ‘Rub it over your son’s face!’ The man went away, and did what the Shaikh had told him to do. The boy recovered completely, joined the Shaikh’s company, and committed himself to his service. He came to be one of his most special companions.

“Whenever the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said to someone who was extremely afraid of fire: ‘Go into the fire!’, that person would suddenly find himself in it. He would stay there as long as Allāh willed, then he would emerge from it, with his clothes unburned, and without having suffered any ill effects. Likewise in the case of someone terrified of lions, he would suddenly find himself riding one, or leading it along, without being frightened by it.

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: ‘My Lord has granted me complete control over everyone who comes into my presence.’ A man, who was present in his audience, said to himself: ‘Here I am. I can stand up, if I wish, and I can sit down, if I wish.’ The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said to him: ‘If you are able to stand up, stand up!’ The man was unable to do so, and he remained in a state of paralysis for a month, incapable of any movement. Then, carried on a stretcher, he came to the Shaikh again, pleading for forgiveness. His plea was accepted, so up he stood, completely cured.’

“On another occasion, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said: ‘No one comes to visit us, unless we wish him to do so.’ A certain person said to himself: ‘I shall pay him a visit, whether he wishes it or not!’ When he came to the gate of the porch, however, he saw an enormous lion crouching there, and the sight of it alarmed him. It roared at him, so he turned and backed away. He was in the habit of hunting and killing lions, so he stopped at a certain distance, and watched the people going in and out, without encountering any kind of interference.

“He remained in that position for a month, incapable of going inside. Finally, after thinking it over to himself, he understood the cause and repented. Then, when he came to the convent [*zāwiyā*],

the lion got up, entered in front of him, shared a joke with the Shaikh, and disappeared. When the man entered, he kissed the Shaikh's hand, and the Shaikh said to him: 'Welcome to the penitent!'"

It was the merchant, Ghānim ibn Mas'ūd al-'Irāqī, who said: "I had decided to travel to the lands of the Persians [*'Ajam*], on a business venture, so I called to say good-bye to Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-A'zab. He said to me: 'If you find yourself in a difficult situation, be sure to invoke my name!' When we reached the desert of Khurāsān, a party of horsemen attacked us, and seized all our goods. The Shaikh's name arose in my heart, and there he was, mounted on a camel! He held a staff in his hand, and he was about to hurl it toward the horsemen. As soon as he had driven the brigands away, he came and collected our stolen goods, and so we recovered them all."

Miqdām ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Baṭā'ihī has told us: "Together with Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-A'zab, I once paid a visit to the tomb of Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī,<sup>262</sup> in al-Ḥadāriyya. Shaikh Ibrāhīm saluted the burial ground, saying: 'Peace be upon you, abode of truly believing people [*Salāmun 'alai-kum dār qawm mu'minīn*]!' I heard Shaikh Abū Muḥammad saying, from his tomb: 'And you, upon you be peace [*wa anta fa-'alai-ka 's-salām*], O Shaikh Ibrāhīm! Give me Miqdām; let him stay here beside me, for I love his recitation [of the Qur'ān].'

"O my master,' Shaikh Ibrāhīm told him, 'Miqdām and I are both here in front of you.' Shaikh Muḥammad said: 'Your permission is necessary for that [for Miqdām to stay with me],' so Shaikh Ibrāhīm said: 'O Miqdām, you heard what the Shaikh said.' 'To hear is to obey,' I replied. Then I said good-bye to Shaikh Ibrāhīm, and sat beside the tomb, reciting the Glorious Qur'ān."

According to Abū Muḥammad ad-Dimyāṭī, the Shaikhs of al-Baṭā'ih maintained that Shaikh Miqdām completed thirty thousand recitations of the entire Qur'ān, at the tomb of Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ash-Shunbukī. May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

Shaikh Ibrāhīm once visited a man afflicted with scabies [*jarab*]. He complained to the Shaikh about his condition, so the Shaikh instructed his personal servant to remove the scabies from him. The servant did as he was told, and the man's body was left like pure silver.

<sup>262</sup> See pp. 348–50 above.

The Shaikh took his leave, along with his servant, who was in agony from the scabies. Somewhere along the road, he caught sight of a pig, so he said: 'May the scabies be removed from you, and may it be transferred to this pig!' The scabies was immediately transferred to the pig, and the servant was restored to good health, through the blessed grace of the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

Shaikh Ibrāhīm (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once attended a spiritual concert [*samā'*], during which the chanter [*qawwāl*] uttered these poetic verses:

He has thrown the veil at me, as you can see me,  
and clothed me in love's ardor, so He has cured me.

My time is all sweet and delightful,  
whenever my Master beholds me.

The chanter exchanged glances with the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him), jumped into the air, and recited:

If I had harbored a betrayal, or intended it one day,  
my spirit would not have reached its desired goals.

Or if the eye, since I parted from You, had looked  
at anything but You, it would have betrayed its inner corners.

Or if the lower self had lured me to any place of comfort,  
apart from You, its enemies would have seized control of it.

I could not have breathed, had You not been inside me,  
causing the spirit to flow from me into its courses.

How many a tear I have yet to shed over You,  
and many a night I shall spend absorbed in You.

You are the source of light in my sight, so let it not be  
that You allow my lower self to flow into its courses.

I have yet to discover a rib, among the ribs of a breast,  
in which I have not found You, before whatever it contains.

Then he uttered the poetic chant:

The space of the hearts of those who really know  
is in a garden Divine, screened by the veils of the Lord.

Contemplating what is in it, while gathering its fruits,  
the spirit of union gently blows in nearness to Allāh.

He protects it and draws it near, so yearning is perplexed,  
and if hopes did not extend so far, they would die of love.

At this point, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) emitted a loud cry, and he called out: “Oh for the men!” The men of the Unseen [*rijāl al-Ghaib*] immediately came down to him from the air above, in twos and threes and fours, saying: “Doubly at your service, inwardly and outwardly [*labbai-ka labbai-k*]!”

It is related that one of the Shaikhs of al-Baṭā’iḥ saw him after his death, so he asked him: “How has Allāh treated you?” The Shaikh replied with these poetic verses:

I clearly beheld Him, and He saw me in my beholding,  
so I vanished from me in my seeing, because of what He signified.

My aspiration truly witnessed my beholding,  
when the meaning of the fact of seeing Him was fully realized.

There is no linkage to separation, and no connection.  
May He forbid my ever parting from Him! May He forbid it!

Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-A‘zab (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in Umm ‘Ubaida, a village in the land of al-Baṭā’iḥ. It was there that he died, in the year [A.H.] 609. His tomb is a local landmark, to which visits are frequently paid.

It is related that the sun was eclipsed on the day of his death. Shaikh ‘Alī al-Qurashī, who was in Damascus on that day, said: “The sun of the sky has been eclipsed, and the sun of the earth has disappeared.” When someone asked him: “And what is the sun of the earth?” he replied: ‘Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-A‘zab. He has died this very day.’ May Allāh be well pleased with them!



## 41. Shaikh ‘Alī ibn Idrīs al-Ya‘qūbī (d. A.H. 619)

**A**s for that exemplary guide, Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Idrīs al-Ya‘qūbī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the preeminent Shaikhs of ‘Irāq, and one of the most distinguished of those who know by direct experience [*‘arifīn*]. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], splendid spiritual states, authentic elucidation, and brilliant disclosure.

Responsibility for the training of spiritual seekers devolved upon him, and more than a few received their education from him. A considerable number became affiliated to him, and a host of students took lessons from him.

He was one of the companions of our master, Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), and of Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Hitī.<sup>263</sup>

He had a beautiful way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the realities [*ahl al-ḥaqā’iq*]. When Shaikh ‘Umar ibn al-Bazzāz<sup>264</sup> came to visit him, he used to stand up for him, step several paces back, and treat him with every mark of honor and respect. Then he would recite this verse of poetry:

I detect from you a scent that I cannot pretend to ignore,  
as if a red-lipped maid of Paradise had been dallying with you! <sup>265</sup>

Here are two of his sayings (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

- All existing entities [*kā’ināt*] have been disclosed to me, from beginning to end. The interpretations [*tarājim*] have also been made available to me, for unless they are available to someone, he cannot be a Shaikh.

<sup>263</sup> See pp. 385–98 above.

<sup>264</sup> See pp. 498–99 above.

<sup>265</sup> *ashammu min-ka nasīman lastu unkiru-hu—ka-anna lamyā’a jarrat fī-ka adhyālā.*

•My Lord has shown me the inhabitants of the Garden of Paradise, those of the Fire of Hell, those of the Isthmus [*Barzakh*],<sup>266</sup> and those of heaven and earth.

It is said that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was familiar with the angels of every heaven, their stations, their expressions of glorification [*tasbīḥ*], their languages, and how they proclaimed the Oneness of Allāh (Exalted is He).

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) would often quote these verses of poetry:

You have sown the seed of love in my heart,  
so I shall not forget until the Day of Summoning.

You have wounded this heart of mine through interconnection,  
so my ardent longing is greater than ever, and love is plain to see.

He has given me a drink that has brought my heart to life,  
in the goblet of love, from the ocean of affection.

Were it not that Allāh safeguards those who truly know Him,  
those who truly know would wander aimlessly in every valley.

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was also fond of quoting these poetic verses:

The heart is on fire, and the tears are chasing one another,  
and sorrow is assembled, while patience is dispersed.

How can steadiness be a duty for one who has no steadiness,  
due to the damage done to him by love and longing and anxiety?

O my Lord, if there is anything at all to give me a breath of life,  
kindly bestow it upon me, while I still have a breath to breathe!

Here is another of his sayings (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

•For ten years, I kept my lower self [*nafs*] safe from passionate desire. Then I kept my heart safe from my lower self, for another decade. Then I kept my innermost being [*sirr*] safe from my heart, for yet another decade. Then we were subjected to temptation, and You kept all of us safe. Allāh is the Best of safekeepers [*Allāhu Khairu 'l-hāfiẓīn*]!

A certain person once lodged a complaint with the Shaikh, about a government official who had subjected him to persecution. The

<sup>266</sup> The term *barzakh* [isthmus; interspace] occurs twice in the Qur'ān (23:100 and 55:20). According to most of the traditional commentators, it refers to the grave, as the intervening space between life in this world and the Resurrection.

Shaikh struck at a tree, saying: “We have killed him,” and the tyrant died at that very moment.

Here is one more saying of his:

•My master made me stand before him, by his authority, and he invested me with a robe, from his noble generosity.<sup>267</sup> Allāh (Exalted is He) had selected that robe with His Power, in eternity-without-beginning [*azal*], and no one may wear it, unless Allāh has chosen him to receive its blessed grace.

Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Idrīs al-Ya‘qūbī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) died in the year [A.H.] 619. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and may He be well pleased with us, for his sake!



<sup>267</sup> Shaikh Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Idrīs al-Ya‘qūbī may have been referring to his investiture by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, or by Shaikh ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥītī (may Allāh be well pleased with them). It is possible, however, that he was describing a purely spiritual experience, in which case the word “Master”—and the relevant pronouns—should be spelled with a capital initial. (There are no capital letters in the Arabic alphabet, so this question only arises in translation.)

## 42. Shaikh ‘Abdu’llāh al-Jubbā’i (d. A.H. 605)

As for Shaikh Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdu’llāh al-Jubbā’i, whom we have mentioned previously,<sup>268</sup> he was one of the most notable Shaikhs, and one of the most distinguished of those who specialize in Reality [*muḥaqqiqīn*]. He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] and priceless spiritual states.

We find the following entry in the *Ta’rīkh* [History] of al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Najjār:

“‘Abdu’llāh ibn Abi ‘l-Ḥasan ibn Abi ‘l-Faraj al-Jubbā’i, the Syrian [*Shāmī*] from Tripoli [*Tarābulus*]:<sup>269</sup> His father was a Christian. He became a Muslim [*aslama*] when he was very young. His commitment to Islām was excellent, and he learned the entire Qur’ān by heart. He moved to Baghdād in pursuit of knowledge, in the year [A.H.] 540. He joined the fellowship of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī, studied Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] according to the school [*madhhab*] of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and took lessons in the Prophetic tradition [*Ḥadīth*] from al-Qāḍī [the Judge] Abu ‘l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Armawī, Abu ‘l-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Abi Ghālib ibn aṭ-Ṭallāba, Abū Bakr Muḥammad az-Zāghūnī, Ibn al-Bannā’, Abu ‘l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir al-Ḥāfiẓ, and others. He took notes in his own handwriting, and produced summaries [of the subjects he studied].

“Then he traveled to Iṣfahān, where he attended the classes of Abu ‘l-Khair Muḥammad ibn al-Bāghibān, Abū ‘Abdī’llāh al-Ḥasan ar-Rasīmī, Abu ‘l-Faraj Mas‘ūd ath-Thaqafī, and other scholars. He acquired manuscript copies [*nusakh*] and original texts. Then he returned to Baghdād, where he narrated the Prophetic tradition

<sup>268</sup> See pp. 29, 47, 48, 50 and 64 above.

<sup>269</sup> The Tripoli [*Tarābulus*] in Lebanon, not the Tripoli [*Tarābulus*] in Libya.

[*Ḥadīth*]. Then he went back to Iṣfahān, where he settled until the time of his death, and narrated tradition in the privacy of his own home.

"He was always accorded a fine reception, and enjoyed dignified status in the sight of the notables. He was a righteous Shaikh, devoutly religious, utterly truthful, very benevolent, and constant in his dedication to worshipful service.

"He wrote me a letter, giving me permission to collect and relate all his stories and reports.

"Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Qaṭī'ī has informed me: 'I asked 'Abdu'llāh al-Jubbā'ī about his family connection, and he said: "We come from a village called al-Jubba, which is situated in Nashrī, one of the provincial districts of Tripoli [*Ṭarābulus*] in Mount Lebanon [*Jabal Lubnān*]. We were Christians. My father died while we very young. My father had been one of the religious scholars of Christianity [*'ulamā' an-Naṣrāniyya*]. Allāh (Exalted is He) decreed the outbreak of wars, so we left our village. In that village of ours, a group of Muslims used to recite the Qur'ān, and I would weep when I heard them. As soon as I entered the territory of Islām, I became a Muslim [*aslamtu*], at the age of eleven. Then I moved to Baghdād, in the year [A.H.] 540."

"I asked him about his birth, and he said: "It was in or around the year '21."

"He died in Iṣfahān, on Saturday the 3rd of Jumādā 'l-Ākhira, in the year [A.H.] 605, and he was buried in the Ṣūfī center [*khānaqāh*] of Bahā' ad-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn Abi 'l-Haijā'." (Here ends the quotation.)

Ibn ad-Dīnathī informs us, in his *Ta'rikh* [History]: "He joined the fellowship of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir, then traveled away from Baghdād after the death of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī, and settled in Iṣfahān." (Here ends the quotation.)

In *Ta'rikh al-Islām* [History of Islām], adh-Dhahabī states: "Reports have been transmitted from him by al-Muwaffaq, aḍ-Ḍiyā', Ibn Khalīl, Abu 'l-Qaṭ, 'ī, and others. He issued diplomas to Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn, al-Fakhr 'Alī, and many more besides." (Here ends the quotation.)

In his *Ṭabaqāt* [Generations], Ibn Rajab informs us: "Ibn Jawzī has recorded a number of reports about him in his books. He said: 'He was one of the righteous.'" (Here ends the quotation.)

May Allāh be well pleased with them all!

43.  
Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī aṣ-Ṣabbāgh  
(d. A.H. 612)

As for that splendid exemplary guide, Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ḥamīd, widely known as aṣ-Ṣabbāgh [the Dyer] (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he was one of the most distinguished of the famous Shaikhs of Egypt, one of the most outstanding of those who know by direct experience [*'ārifīn*], and one of the noblest of those who specialize in Reality [*muḥaqqiqīn*].

He was endowed with obvious charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], splendid spiritual states, supernatural feats, truthful utterances, exalted aspirations, lofty indications, illuminating concepts, and esoteric forms of knowledge. He was also endowed with authentic elucidation, brilliant disclosure, radiant insights, and dazzling realizations. He held the loftiest peak of the contours of holiness, the highest degree in the witnessing of nearness, and the summit of the ascending stages of dedication.

He was extremely well versed in the skills of contentious debate. He was endowed with supernatural vision of the worlds of the transcendental domains [*'awālim al-mughayyabāt*], truthful reporting of the real meanings of the signs [*ḥaqā'iq al-āyāt*], a firm footing in effectiveness, and a controlling grasp of the reins of management.

It was he who said: “No one upon this Spiritual Path [*Ṭarīq*] owes any favor to anyone, except to Allāh (Exalted is He) and to His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

He was one of those whom Allāh (Exalted is He) has presented in high profile to His creatures, for he granted him freedom of management in the realm of existence [*wujūd*], disrupted the customary patterns of nature for his benefit, manifested supernatural exploits at his hands, made him privy to the secrets of sainthood [*wilāya*],

established him in control of the spiritual states of the ultimate stages of development [*nihāyāt*], caused him to speak of the wondrous marvels of wisdom, appointed him as an exemplary guide for spiritual wayfarers [*sālikīn*], and established him as a proof [*ḥujja*] for those who learn by direct experience [*ʿārifīn*].

He was one of the pillars of this [spiritual] business, in the spheres of knowledge and practice [*ʿilm wa ʿamal*], pious abstinence [*zuḥd*], real achievement [*taḥqīq*], cautious restraint [*waraʿ*], effective ability [*tamkīn*], and awesome dignity [*mahāba*].

He joined the fellowship of Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ḥajūn al-Maghribī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), to whom he became affiliated, as well as that of Shaikh Abū Muḥammad 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Maḥmūd al-Maghribī. He met many of the Shaikhs in Egypt.

His own Shaikh, Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥīm, would often extol his merit, and he went so far as to say of him: "Abu 'l-Ḥasan has entered through a door that we have not entered."

Shaikh Abū Muḥammad al-Jazūlī once said: "Abu 'l-Ḥasan aṣ-Ṣabbāgh has been entrusted with a secret that has not been entrusted to us."

It was Shaikh Aḥmad, widely known as ar-Ra's [the Head], who said: "Shaikh Abū Ḥasan is a consummate Shaikh in the sight of Allāh (Exalted is He)."

The leadership of this [spiritual] business devolved upon him, in his own time, in all the lands of Egypt. More than a few of its people received their education from him, including:

- Shaikh Abū Bakr ibn Shāfi' al-Qūṣī
- Shaikh 'Alam ad-Dīn al-Manfalūṭī
- Shaikh al-Imām Majd ad-Dīn 'Alī ibn Wahb ibn Muṭī' al-Qushairī, widely known as Ibn Daqīq.

Of those endowed with remarkable spiritual states, a considerable number became affiliated to him. A host of the righteous became his students, and many scholars [*ʿulamā'*], jurists [*fuqahā'*], Qur'ān-reciters [*qurrā'*] and spiritual paupers [*fuqarā'*] were among those who assembled in his presence. May Allāh be well pleased with them all! They derived great benefit from his teaching and his fellowship.

He attracted a stream of visitors, for he was an excellent jurist [*faqīh*], highly refined in his behavior, noble and generous, modest and humble. He combined honorable conduct with the most noble of personal attributes and the finest traits of character. He treated the learned and the devoutly religious with loving affection, and he supervised the training of spiritual seekers [*murīdīn*] with meticulous dedication.

He had a fine way of speaking, in the language of those who specialize in the realities [*ahl al-ḥaqā'iq*], as the following sayings of his will serve to illustrate:

- The spiritual seeker [*murīd*] is the marksman who aims his first intent toward Allāh (Exalted is He), and never swerves toward anything other than Him.

- The Lord of Truth [*Ḥaqq*] is the target indicated by the signs. To none but Him must the seeker bear witness, and he must set his sights on nothing apart from Him.

- He has shielded them [His creatures] with the names, so they have lived and thrived. If He had shown them the knowledge of destiny [*qadar*], they would have failed. If He had made Reality [*Ḥaqīqa*] apparent to them, they would have died.

It was the righteous Shaikh Abu 'l-Qāsim Naṣru'llāh al-Asnā'ī who said: "The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once installed a man in a chamber of retreat [*khalwa*]. He used to check up on those of his companions who were practicing retreat, each day and night. When he entered that man's chamber, on one of the last ten nights of Ramaḍān, he found him weeping, so he asked him about his condition.

"O my master,' said the man, 'Here am I, witnessing the Night of Power [*Lailat al-Qadr*], and I can see how everything on the face of the earth is bowing down in prostration. Yet whenever I intend to perform the act of prostration [*sujūd*], I discover that something in my inner being, something shaped like an iron rod, is preventing me from making prostration.'

"O my dear son,' the Shaikh said to him, 'you need not worry! The rod that you discover is the secret instrument, which I have deposited

inside you, to make it impossible for you to perform any action, unless it is truly meritorious. All that you are witnessing now, concerning the prostration of things, is a vision conjured up by the Devil [*Shaiṭān*]. He wants you to prostrate yourself because of what he has planted in your imagination, in order to find a means of misguiding you.'

"The man found himself wondering: 'From where can I obtain the verification of that?' Before he had finished asking himself the question, the Shaikh said to him: "You must look for evidence to prove it!" Then he stretched out his right hand, and I saw that it extended to the farthest point in the east. Then he stretched out his left hand, and I saw that it extended to the farthest point in the west. Then he clasped them both gently toward him.'

"The man went on to say: 'I could see that light, and all the things I had witnessed in prostration. They were all closing up together, until the space between the palms of his hands was no more than a cubit. That light began to take shape, until it assumed the form of a human being. He was screaming: 'O my master! Help, help! I shall not return. I shall go back where I came from.' As soon as he drew close to the Shaikh, I saw an enormous flash of light emerge from the Shaikh's mouth, illuminating everything. That shape turned black, and extremely filthy. It emitted an enormous yell, then turned into a puff of smoke, and rose up into the atmosphere, scattering in all directions. 'O my dear son,' said the Shaikh, 'there goes the hallucination. You can see what has become of it.'"

It was the virtuous Abū 'Abdī'llāh Muḥammad ibn Sinān al-Qurashī who said: "I used to work in the service of the Shaikh, in Qanā, and I was absent from my family for nine months. I longed to be with my family, and while I was experiencing a particular bout of yearning, the Shaikh came down from his private quarters, and said to me: 'O Muḥammad, are you longing for your family?' 'Yes,' said I, so he took me by the hand, and led me into a room. 'Rub your eyes,' he told me, so I did so. Then he said: 'Raise your head,' so I raised my head, and lo and behold, I was at the door of my own house in Egypt! I went inside, and my family welcomed me, saluting me with the greeting of peace.

“I kept my situation a secret from them, and spent the rest of the day with them. I ate a couple of meals with them, and gave my father twenty dirhams [silver coins] that I happened to have on me. Then, when the call to the sunset prayer [*maghrib*] was given, I stepped out through the door of the house. Lo and behold, I was at the door of the guesthouse [*ribāṭ*] in Qanā, and the Shaikh was standing there. ‘O Muḥammad,’ he said to me, ‘have you quenched your longing for your family?’ ‘Yes,’ said I.

“Then, after I had stayed with him for a month, I asked his permission to travel to Egypt. He gave me his leave, and I reached my destination in twenty-five days. The members of my family were delighted to see me, and they said: ‘We were despairing of you.’ When I asked them why, my mother told me my story from beginning to end, though I had never revealed my situation to her, and I did not say anything about it, until the Shaikh died. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

“One day, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was on the seashore, and he had a jug with him, which he was using in the performance of his ritual ablution [*wūḍūʿ*]. He heard a loud cry, so he abandoned his ablution, and rushed to the spot from which he had heard the cry. When he asked what it was about, he was told: ‘The crocodile [*timsāḥ*] has seized a man!’ He looked, and saw that it had the man between its jaws, halfway out toward the depth of the ocean. He shouted at the creature, and it came to a halt where it was, making no movement at all.

“The Shaikh then walked across the surface of the water, saying: ‘In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate [*Bismiʾllāhi ʿr-Raḥmāni ʿr-Raḥīm*].’ He kept walking on the face of the water, until he reached the crocodile, and said to it: ‘Woe unto you! Drop that man!’ It promptly dropped him out of its mouth. The Shaikh then laid his hand on the crocodile, and said: ‘Die, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He)!’ It died there and then, and he said to the man: ‘Get yourself onto the land!’ ‘I can’t do it,’ he replied, ‘because of my bad thigh, and I’m not a good swimmer, anyway!’ The Shaikh said: ‘Go! This is the way to safety,’ and he pointed to the road on dry land.

“The sea between the Shaikh and the man immediately turned solid as a rock, all the way to the shore, so the Shaikh and the man walked to the beach, while the people stood watching them. Then the sea returned to its normal state, and they dragged the dead crocodile out of the water.”

It was Shaikh Majd ad-Dīn al-Qushairī who said: “In Qūṣ, the lions and the snakes used to seek his company (may Allāh be well pleased with him). On more than one occasion, I saw him washing his feet, in order to remove the saliva deposited on them by the lions, when they laid their heads on his feet.

“I once saw him sitting alone, when men started coming down to him out of the air, in twos and threes and fours, until a considerable number of them had assembled around him. The saints [*awliyā'*], the invisible men [*ghaibiyūn*] and the Shaikhs (may Allāh be well pleased with them all), as well as the jinn, used to comply with his commands. He could even say to a lion: ‘Do not move away from here,’ and it would stay in its place, without harming anyone, until the Shaikh told it to depart.

“Cardinal Poleship [*Quṭbiyya*] was often attributed to him. I spent some time in his fellowship, and served him in private and in public. I never saw him abandon good conduct, and he never said anything that was inconsistent with the Sacred Law [*Sharī'a*], or that could have been held against him.”

It was Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥajjāj al-Aqṣarī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) who said: “While the Shaikh was conducting a session, one of his pupils asked him: ‘What is the distinguishing mark of direct perception of the lights of the Majesty [*Jalāl*] of Allāh (Exalted is He)? How does it appear in the realm of existence [*wujūd*]?’ To this the Shaikh replied: ‘The innermost being [*sirr*], which is stationed in the realm of existence, can see that by which He has established the existence of all things. If it looks at a disobedient sinner, it makes him feel ashamed. If it looks at a forgetful person, it reminds him. If it looks at someone who is deficient, it makes him complete.’

“Another of his pupils asked: ‘O my master, what then is the distinguishing mark of someone who matches this description?’ The

Shaikh replied: 'It is such, that if he looked at this stone, it would melt in awe of him.' The Shaikh then looked at a huge stone that was lying there beside him, and it melted, turned into water, and seeped into the ground."

Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥajjāj also said: "A certain man, one of the people of Egypt, once lost his spiritual state, so he came to the Shaikh and implored him, swearing: 'You are capable of restoring it!' 'Be patient,' the Shaikh told him, 'while I seek permission to restore it.' The man stayed in his presence for three days. On the fourth day, the Shaikh shared with him a meal of honey and yoghurt, and the man rediscovered his spiritual state, twofold.

"The Shaikh said to him: 'I sought permission to restore your spiritual state. When you ate the yoghurt with me, your spiritual state was restored to you. Then, when you ate the honey with me, your spiritual state was doubled for you. You will not be able to experience it freely, however, until you leave my town.' The man recognized that his spiritual state was indeed with him, and another like it, but he could not experience it freely, until he left the area of the Shaikh's town. May Allāh be well pleased with the Shaikh!"

He also said: "The Shaikh once issued an open invitation to a meal sufficient for seven persons. Almost a hundred men shared that meal, and there was still food left over."

Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥajjāj al-Aqṣarī also said: "One year, Shaikh Abu'l-Ḥasan aṣ-Ṣabbāgh was passing through the orchards of Qūṣ, at the time of the forenoon prayer [*duḥā*], when he noticed a dove perched on a tree, warbling with a heart-rending sound. He stopped to listen to it, then he experienced a state of rapture, and became immersed in his ecstasy [*wajd*]. Then he uttered these poetic verses:

O dove, I can see you, so please let us know  
for whom you are cooing, and whom you are lamenting.

Your sorrowful wailing has rent the heart asunder,  
and you have made water flow, alas for you, like a spring.

Come! Let us prepare a funeral wake for the parting,  
and let us mourn our friends who are leaving.

Let me help you with the wailing, so that you may be consoled,  
for that is how the mourner can comfort the mourner.

“Then he wept, and recited these poetic verses:

Would a dove ever weep, except for the loss of its lover?  
Yet I am refraining from it—how can that be?

Why am I not weeping, and lamenting one departed,  
when the malady of yearning is concealed between the ribs?

Before it felt Your love, my heart was always hard,  
but if tribulation lingers in it, it will surely soften.

Their mourning rags are a care that arouses its sadness,  
for in it there are many kinds of fierce heat and sorrows.

“Then he collapsed in a faint, and when he regained consciousness, he recited:

Sing me a sad song about separation,  
for between the ribs there is a hidden malady.

Insignificant and trivial is every affair of this world,  
apart from the companion's loss of the companion.

So grant me the tears of your eyes, by Allāh,  
and be a helper to me in the shedding of tears.

Drops of blood will I then shed, as well as tears,  
and the prospect of parting will cause the eyes to weep.

“The tears streamed from his eyes, and that dove fell to the ground. It lay there, flapping its wings in front of him, until it died.”

Shaikh Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī aṣ-Ṣabbāgh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) settled in Qanā, a village in Upper Egypt [*Ṣa'īd Miṣr al-A'lā*], and it was there that he died, in the middle of Sha'bān, in the year [A.H.] 612. He was buried beside his own Shaikh, Shaikh 'Abd ar-Raḥīm, in the graveyard of Qanā. His tomb is a local landmark, to which visits are frequently paid. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

The abovementioned Shaikh 'Alī aṣ-Ṣabbāgh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: “Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) received a special quality from Allāh (Exalted is He), of a kind not obtained by many of the champions of Truth [*ṣiddīqīn*].” Whenever he mentioned Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he used to recite this verse of poetry:

Your excellence will never cease, for wonders  
like the sea are told of it, without restraint.

Shaikh ar-Radīnī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) became affiliated to our Shaikh and our master, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). Whenever his charismatic exploits [*manāqib*] were mentioned, he used to express his admiration of him, and he would recite the verse of poetry quoted immediately above.



## Concerning the birth and death of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

According to al-Quṭb al-Yunainī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him): “Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was born in the year [A.H.] 470. His son, ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, has told us: ‘I asked my father about his date of birth, and he said: “I have no exact knowledge of it, but I do know that I arrived in Baghdād in the year in which at-Tamīmī died, and that I was eighteen years of age at that time.”’ It was in the year [A.H.] 488 that at-Tamīmī died.”

It was the erudite Shaikh Shams ad-Dīn ibn Nāṣir ad-Dīn ad-Dimashqī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“He was born in the small town of al-Jīl, in the year [A.H.] 470. There are two places called al-Jīl. One of them is a extensive area, bordering on the districts of ad-Dailam, which contains many towns, but no big city. The other al-Jīl is the native town of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. It is also called al-Gīl,<sup>270</sup> and al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Muḥammad ibn Sa’d ad-Dīnathī referred to it as al-Kāl.<sup>271</sup> He probably took this spelling from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, the poet, for he called it al-Kāl in one of his poems. It is a village to the south of the [ancient] cities of Chosroes [*Kisrā*].<sup>272</sup>

“He died (may Allāh be well pleased with him), after his precious life had reached its conclusion, in Baghdād, on the night of Saturday the 8th of the month of Rabī‘ al-Ākhir, in the year [A.H.] 561. He

<sup>270</sup> Since there is no letter <g> in the Arabic alphabet (and no capitalization), the spelling <al-kīl> is used in the original text, with the explanation: “The letter <k> represents a mixed sound, between <j> and a pure <k> [*al-kīl bi-kāf mashūba bi’l-jīm wa bi-kāf khāliṣa*].”

<sup>271</sup> Probably representing the pronunciation <al-Gāl>.

<sup>272</sup> See note 15 on p. 42 above.

was buried during the night, in the precincts of his schoolhouse at the Portico Gate [*Bāb al-Azaj*] in Baghdād. May Allāh be well pleased with him!

In his historical work entitled *Mir'āt az-Zamān* [Mirror of the Age], the erudite Shams ad-Dīn Abu 'l-Muẓaffar Yūsuf Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) includes the following account in his discussion of those who died in the year [A.H.] 561:

"He was buried at night, to avoid overcrowding, for no one in Baghdād would have stayed away [from his funeral]. The Racetrack District [*al-Ḥalba*], with all its streets, markets and houses, would have been filled to overflowing, so it would have been impossible to bury him in the daytime."

Similar statements are made in the works of Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn al-Kathīr, both entitled *Ta'rikh* [History].

As we are informed by al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥibb ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn an-Najjār, in his *Ta'rikh* [History]:

"Abu 'l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Shāfi' al-Ḥanbalī said: 'The birth of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) occurred in the year [A.H.] 471.' Abū 'Abdī'llāh Muḥammad adh-Dhahabī said likewise."

Ibn an-Najjār also tells us: "He died in the night preceding the morning of Saturday, the 10th of Rabi' al-Ākhir, in the year [A.H.] 561. His funeral preparations were completed by night, and his son 'Abd al-Wahhāb performed his funeral prayer, in a congregation attended by his children, his companions and his pupils. Then he was buried in the porch of his schoolhouse. The door of the schoolhouse was not opened until the day had fully dawned. People then rushed to perform the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*] at his grave, and to pay him a farewell visit. That was a truly memorable day. May Allāh be well pleased with him!" (Here ends the quotation.)

The Caliph [*Khalīfa*], in Baghdād at that time, was al-Mustanjid-bi'llāh Abu 'l-Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn al-Muqtafi-li-Amri'llāh Muḥammad ibn al-Mustazhir-bi'llāh Aḥmad ibn al-Muqtadī-bi-Amri'llāh 'Abdu'llāh ibn Muḥammad adh-Dhakhīra ibn al-Qā'im-bi-Amri'llāh 'Abdu'llāh al-'Abbāsī. May Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him and his forebears!

The author of *ar-Rawḍ az-Zāhir* [The Beautiful Gardens] has this to say, in his biographical account [*tarjama*] of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

“The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) had a family connection with Jīl, which is a region of scattered settlements beyond Ṭabaristān. It is also called Jilān, and the names Gīl and Gīlān are sometimes applied to it.” (Here ends the quotation.)

In his *Ṭabaqāt* [Generations], al-Ḥāfiẓ Zain ad-Dīn ibn Rajab informs us: “On the morning following his burial, Naṣr an-Namīrī elegized him with an ode [*qaṣīda*], beginning with the verse:

How hazy things appear on this new morning,  
in the absence of that once-familiar splendor!<sup>273</sup>

“He also composed another elegy in his honor.” (Here ends the quotation.)

According to the author of *Bahjat al-Asrār* [The Splendor of the Mysteries]: “Shaikh Abu 'l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Shāfi' al-Jīlī al-Ḥanbalī said that the birth of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) occurred in the year [A.H.] 471. He also said that he was born in Niq, one of the towns of Jilān, which is a region of scattered settlements beyond Ṭabaristān.”

(Here ends this abbreviated quotation.)

☞ Concerning some of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir's charismatic qualities and exploits [*manāqib*], and some of the things that have been said about him. ☞

Let us now conclude this synopsis with some mention of his charismatic qualities and exploits [*manāqib*], and of what has been said about him, as promised at the outset.<sup>274</sup>

Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: “When I was a young boy at the elementary school, an angel used to come to me every day.<sup>275</sup> I did not realize that he was an angel, for he assumed the form of a human being. He used to escort me from

<sup>273</sup> *mushkilu 'l-amru dha 'ṣ-ṣabāḥa 'l-jadīda—mā la-hu dhālika 's-sana 'l-ma'hūd.*

<sup>274</sup> See p. 6 above.

<sup>275</sup> For a somewhat similar account, see p. 34 above.

our house to the school, and he would tell the other boys to clear a space for me to sit in. He would sit beside me until I left to go home. ‘Who are you?’ I asked him one day, and he replied: ‘I am one of the angels (peace be upon them). Allāh (Exalted is He) has sent me to you. I must stay with you as long as you are attending the elementary school.’ I used to learn more, every day, than anyone else learned in a week.” May Allāh be well pleased with him!

It is related that one of his fond admirers once swore, by the oath of triple divorce [*bi’ṭ-ṭalāq ath-thalāth*], that he was superior in merit to Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī<sup>276</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him). Then he sought the legal advice of the scholars of ‘Irāq, but none of them would give him a response, so he felt terribly confused about his situation. He was told: “You need to consult Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, for he is better informed about that,” so he approached him and told him his story. When the Shaikh asked him: “What prompted you to do such a thing?” he said: “It simply popped out of me. Tell me what I must do now. Should I separate from my wife, or should I stay with her?”

The Shaikh said to him: “You must cohabit with your wife, for whatever Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī attained to, I have attained to it. I have outstripped him in the merit of the science of legal opinion [*futṭā*], for he never delivered a formal legal opinion. I have married, whereas he never married. I have provided for children, whereas he never made such provision.”

May Allāh be well pleased with them both!



<sup>276</sup> See note 238 on p. 476 above.

## Eulogy of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir by Shaikh ‘Izz ad-Dīn ibn ‘Abd as-Salām.

**I**t was the Sulṭān of the scholars, Shaikh ‘Izz ad-Dīn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd as-Salām as-Sulamī ash-Shāfi‘ī, the settler in Cairo, (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), who said:

“The charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir have been established as authentic by a consensus of numerous reporters. Confirmation by such consensus [*tawātur*] cannot be ascribed to the charismatic talents of any of the saints [*awliyā’*], to the same degree as to the charismatic talents of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him). He is widely renowned for his knowledge and practice, and for his meticulous attention to inner guidance [*taḥarrī*] in everything he said. He is so famous, indeed, that there is no need for further commentary on the subject. Allāh knows best, of course!”

As reported by al-Qāḍī [the Judge] Muḥir ad-Dīn al-‘Ulaimī, in his *Ta’rīkh* [History]: “Our master, Shaikh ‘Izz ad-Dīn achieved the degree of independent judgment [*ijtihād*],<sup>277</sup> combined with pious abstinence [*zuhd*], so that his aptitude for revelatory disclosures [*mukāshafāt*] became conspicuously apparent. He was accorded the honorific title ‘Sulṭān of the Scholars [*Sulṭān al-‘Ulamā’*].’ He excelled in the art of public speaking, and his lectures were adorned with remarkable anecdotes and poems. He used to attend the spiritual concert [*samā’*], in which he would move like a dancer. He died in [one of the months of] Jumādā, in the year [A.H.] 606.” (Here ends this abbreviated quotation.) May Allāh bestow His mercy upon them both!

<sup>277</sup> As a technical term of Islāmic jurisprudence, *ijtihād* means the effort made by a qualified expert to reach an independent judgment on a point of law, through the interpretation and application of the four basic sources or principles [*uṣūl*], namely the Qur’ān, the Sunna, the consensus [*ijmā’*] of the recognized authorities, and deduction by analogy [*qiyās*]. A person qualified to exercise *ijtihād* is called a *mujtahid*.

I owe the following report to my master, the son of my paternal uncle, the erudite scholar and exemplary guide, Raḍī ad-Dīn Muḥammad, the son of our patron, the erudite al-Burhānī ibn Ishāq Ibrāhīm at-Tādifi (may Allāh grant me the benefit of their lives):

“One of the charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] of Shaikh ‘Izz ad-Dīn (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was demonstrated when a dove fell down upon him, during his lecture session. The dove was released from the claws of a bird of prey, which had tried to snatch it. These poetic verses were then recited, by someone who had appeared unexpectedly in his presence (may Allāh be well pleased with him):

A dove has come to the Solomon of the age,  
while death is wailing from a raptor’s wings.

*jā’at Sulaimāna ’z-zamāni ḥamāmatun  
wa ’l-mawtu yahtifu min janāḥai khāṭif*

Who can have told the stockdove that your place  
is a sanctuary, and that you are a refuge for the fearful?

*man anba’ a ’l-warqā’ a anna maḥalla-kum  
ḥaramun wa anna-ka malja’ un li’l-khā’if.*

Someone asked the Shaikh of Islām, Shaikh Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar ash-Shāfi’ī al-‘Asqalānī (may Allāh water his land with the pouring rain of mercy and good pleasure): “Has it been reported, concerning Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, that he ever attended the spiritual concert [*samā’*], in which the spiritual paupers [*fuqarā’*] played tambourines [*dufūf*] and other such musical instruments, or that he instructed people to attend it, or that he said anything about it, to suggest that it is permissible or to declare it unlawful?”

To this he replied (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him): “As for Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, from all the authentic reports that have reached us about him, it is clear that he was an expert jurist [*faqīh*], a pious abstainer [*zāhid*], and a devout worshipper [*‘ābid*]. He used to deliver public lectures, urging the people to abstinence and repentance, and warning them of the punishment for sinful disobedience. Countless people repented at his hand. He was endowed with charismatic talents [*karāmāt*] in great abundance, far more than have been reported to us in connection with anyone else, whether of his own generation or since his time. With regard to the question of the

spiritual concert [*samā'*], involving those musical instruments, I know nothing about him in that context.”

In his book entitled *Masālik al-Abṣār* [The Faculties of Vision], that learned Imām, the excellent and noble Abu 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad, widely known as Ibn Faḍli'llāh, informs the reader:

“As for Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ 'Abdi'llāh ibn Jangī Dost al-Jilī al-Ḥanbalī 'Alam al-Awliyā' [the Beacon of the Saints] Muḥyi 'd-Dīn [the Reviver of the Religion] Abū Muḥammad, he is the chieftain of a spiritual community [*ṭā'ifa*], who do not invent falsehood by day, and who seek forgiveness in the hours before dawn.

“He arose from [the seed of] Hāshim ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, among the nobles [*dhawā'ib*], and sipped water from him in a pond from which the she-camels called *sawā'ib* did not drink.<sup>278</sup> His prop [*qilāl*] was firmly fixed in the loftiness of nobility, and his pin [*khilāl*] was deeply rooted in the honor of sublime ancestral lineage.

“He used to hold a public session [*majlis*], in which he moved his audience to sighing and weeping, and in which he stirred his companions to action. You might have supposed that the mountains were solid, but they be would floating like the clouds. There was no limit to his exercise of judgment [*ijtihād*] and his dedication to the sacred struggle [*jihād*]. He used to say:

It may be that your Lord will raise you up  
'asā an yab'atha-ka Rabbu-ka  
to a praiseworthy station.  
*maqāman maḥmūdā*. (17:79)

“He was *mukhlis* [sincerely devoted to the truth], more so than any of his counterparts, and *mukhlas* [completely untainted by hypocrisy]. His trust in Allāh was total and real [*tawakkala 'ala 'llāhi haqqa*]

<sup>278</sup> This is an allusion to a practice of the pagan Arabs, condemned by the Qur'ān:

Allāh has not appointed [anything in the nature]  
*mā ja'ala 'llāhu*  
of a *Baḥīra*, a *Sā'iba*, a *Waṣīla* or a *Ḥāmī*.  
*min baḥīratin wa lā sā'ibatin wa lā ḥāmīn*. (5:103)

According to Ibn Hishām: “The *sā'iba* [of which *sawā'ib* is the plural form] is a she-camel which a man vows that he will set free if he recovers from his sickness, or if he gains an object which he seeks; and when he has freed a she-camel or a camel for one of their gods, then it runs free and pastures, no profit being made from it.” (See: A. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 703)

'*ttikāli-h*], even though he was among the remnants of a people returning [to their worship of the Lord]:

They used to sleep but a little of the night,  
*kānū qalīlan minā 'l-laili mā yahja'ūn.* (51:17)

“They have joined the nights to the moments before dawn. They have ridden the storm of the deserts and the desolate waste of the oceans, so they have come to praise what they used to do,

and in their Lord they put their trust.  
*wa 'alā Rabbi-him yatawakkalūn.* (8:2)”



## Eulogy of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir by al-Yāfi‘ī in his *Ta’rīkh* [History].

**T**hat erudite Imām, that exemplary guide, that piously cautious ascetic, endowed with intimate knowledge of Allāh (Exalted is He), Shaikh ‘Afif ad-Dīn Muḥammad ‘Abdu’llāh ibn Sa’d ibn ‘Alī ibn Sulaimān ibn Fallāḥ al-Yāfi‘ī al-Yamanī-thumma-’l-Makkī ash-Shāfi‘ī, has this to say in his *Ta’rīkh* [History]:

“As for the Cardinal Pole of the Noble Saints [*Quṭb al-Awliyā’ al-Kirām*], the Shaikh of the Muslims, the Pillar of the Sacred Law [*Rukn ash-Sharī‘a*], the Signpost of the Spiritual Path [*‘Alam at-Ṭarīqa*], the Elucidator of the Secrets of Reality [*Mūḍiḥ Asrār al-Ḥaqīqa*], the Standard-bearer of the Scholars of the Esoteric Sciences and the Glorious Qualities [*Ḥāmil Rāya ‘Ulamā’ al-Ma‘ārif wa ‘l-Mafākhir*], the Shaikh of Shaikhs, the Exemplary Guide of the Preeminent Enlightened Saints [*Qudwat al-Awliyā’ al-‘Ārifīn al-Akābir*], the Professor of the Realm of Existence [*Ustādh al-Wujūd*], Abū Muḥammad Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ al-Jīlī, may Allāh sanctify his innermost being, and may He illuminate his mausoleum.

“He was adorned (may Allāh be well pleased with him) with the finery of the sciences of the Sacred Law [*Sharī‘a*], and he mastered their subtle details. He was embellished with the crowns of the subjects of religious knowledge, and he achieved their noble distinctions.

“In his migration to the Truth [*Ḥaqq*], he moved away from all created entities. On his journey to his Lord [*Rabb*], he observed the finest patterns of behavior and the most honorable standards of conduct.

“The banners of sainthood [*al-wiyat al-wilāya*] were dedicated to him, with their cords attached to the highest flagstaff. The orbits

of his majesty were raised aloft, with their planets in the heaven of nearness.

“His heart perceived the stripes of revelation [*fath*] on the skirts of the disclosure [*kashf*] of the mysteries. His innermost being [*sirr*] gazed at the suns of esoteric insights [*ma‘ārif*] from the points where the lights arise. His vision witnessed the brides of the realities [*‘arā’is al-ḥaqā’iq*] in the palaces of the invisible realms. His conscience [*sarīra*] dwelt in a private chamber in the presence of Holiness [*Quds*].

“The lover [*muḥibb*] became united with the Beloved [*Maḥbūb*], whose secrets were unveiled to the beholder of Splendor and Perfection, and he became a permanent guest in the abodes of Might and Majesty. Knowledge of the well-kept secret was disclosed to him there. The real meaning of the truth of certainty [*ḥaqīqat ḥaqq al-yaqīn*] was fully explained to him. He was made privy to the hidden contents of the concealed repositories of the mysteries. He witnessed the courses of destiny [*qadar*] in the implementation of wishes. He excavated gems of wisdom [*ḥikam*] from their mines, and brought treasures to light from their hidden stores.

“He was then assigned the pure task, free from contamination and deception, of holding sessions of wise counsel at al-Ḥalba an-Nūrāniyya [the Luminous Arena], in the month of Shawwāl of the year [A.H.] 521. He thereupon convened a public session [*majlis*]—and what an excellent session, the excellence of which can only be attributed to Allāh! It was adorned with dignity and splendor, and it was surrounded by the angels and the saints [*awliyā’*].

“He acted in accordance with the Book and the Sunna, as a speaker citing evidence. He summoned the people to Allāh (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He), and they were quick to follow his guidance. Oh, what a summoner [*dā’*] was he! The spirits of the ardently yearning responded to his call. And what an inviting crier [*nād*]! The hearts of those who truly know accepted his invitation. And what a camel-driver [*ḥād*]! He sent the riding beasts of human nature roaming through the deserts of longing, to reach the vision of Beauty [*Jamāl*]. And what a guide [*ḥād*]! He led the thoroughbred steeds of the hearts to the sanctuary of arrival. And what a cupbearer [*sāq*]! He quenched the thirst of the minds with the drink of Holiness [*Quds*],

and made them long for companionship with the Loved One, on the carpet of intimate friendship.

“He lifted the veils from the faces of the esoteric sciences [*ma‘ārif*]. He removed the coverings of the overgrowth [*ghain*] from the well [*‘ain*] of the fellow-drinkers of subtleties [*latā’if*]. He shook the heartstrings with the description of the beauty of infinite preexistence [*qidam*]. He made the shapes of the spirits dance to the tune of the perfection of noble grace. The birds of the innermost beings [*asrār*] intoned, in the congregational mosques [*jawāmi‘*] of their sanctuary, the delightful melodies of their intimate friendship, so they flew, in the love thereof, from the pillars of their mountains to their nests.

“He unveiled the brides of the religious exhortations, so the lovers [*ushshāq*] were stunned by the splendor of their beauty. He paraded the secluded maidens [*mukhaddarāt*] of the spiritual talents, so every yearning heart was attracted by the quality of their beauty.

“He caused the pastures to ripen, with the precious fruits of wisdom from the gardens of intimate friendship. He produced the jewels of the affirmation of Oneness [*tawhīd*] from the oceans of the sciences, while their waves collided, distinguishing their various properties, such as those of pearls and sapphires. He used to draw milk [*darr*] from the pearls [*durr*], and solid food [*qūt*] from the sapphires [*yāqūt*].

“He adorned the meadows of the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*] with the gardens of the essence of splendor. How fortunate for travelers on the path to Allāh (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He), to have such love and such a proof! He scattered the pearls of revelation [*fath*] on the carpet of inspiration [*ilhām*], and those endowed with minds and pens competed in picking them up. The benefits of guidance were strung together from those pearls, on the necks of those endowed with lofty aspirations, so that their wearer could attain, by the leave of Allāh (Exalted is He), to the highest spiritual stations.

“He roamed inside the natures [*nufūs*] of human beings, as freely as breaths roam in their breasts, and he made their hearts fragrant with the scent of gardens showered by rain. He cured their natures of their sicknesses, and cleared their minds of their illusions. No one who heard him ever failed to declare his commitment to repentance, or to make his eyelids sore from weeping.

“How many a sinner he brought back to Allāh (Exalted is He)! How many a fainthearted weakling he reinvigorated! How many drunkards he rescued from the wine of passion! How many prisoners he released from the shackles of their lower selves [*nufūs*! How many mainstays [*awtād*] and spiritual deputies [*abdāl*] did Allāh choose because of him! On how many men did Allāh confer a spiritual station, because of him! The thoroughbred steeds of spiritual talents never ceased to ride toward him. May Allāh (Blessed and Exalted is He) bestow His mercy upon him!

Your servant is above the highest heights in rank,  
and his are all the virtues and the finest glory.

*‘abdu-ka fawqa ‘l-mā‘ālī rutbatan  
wa la-hu ‘l-mahāsīnu wa ‘l-fakhār al-afkharu*

The realities and the paths are his, to the fullest extent,  
and the intimate forms of knowledge shine for him like stars.

*wa la-hu ‘l-ḥaqā‘iqu wa ‘t-ṭarā‘iqu fi ‘l-madā  
wa la-hu ‘l-mā‘ārifu ka-‘l-kawākibi tazharu*

His are all the merits, the graces, and the call,  
and in the gatherings his marvels are renowned.

*wa la-hu ‘l-faḍā‘ilu wa ‘l-makārimu wa ‘n-nidā  
wa la-hu ‘l-manāqibu fi ‘l-mahāfili tunsharu*

Preeminence is his, and the high points in nobility,  
and many are his degrees in ultimate achievement.

*wa la-hu ‘t-taqaddumu wa ‘l-mā‘ālī fi ‘l-‘alā  
wa la-hu ‘l-marātibu fi ‘n-nihāyati takthuru*

The helper of humankind, the rain of generosity, the light of guidance,  
the full moon of the night, the sun of the forenoon—no, even brighter!

*ghawthu ‘l-warā ghaithu ‘n-nadā nūru ‘l-hudā  
badru ‘d-dujā shamsu ‘d-duḥā bal anwaru*

He traversed all the sciences with the faculties of reason,  
so their mountain peaks are in confusion far below him.

*qaṭa‘a ‘l-‘ulūma ma‘a ‘l-‘uqūli fa-aṣbahat  
aṭwāru-hā min dūni-hi tatahayyarū*

No one can bring an argument, disputing his high standing,  
for consensus of opinion on the matter has duly been recorded.

*mā fi ‘ulā-hu maqālatun li-mukhālifin  
fa-masā‘ilu ‘l-ijmā‘i fi-hi tusatṭaru.*

“The pinnacles of the age were illuminated by him, the fundamentals of religion were ennobled by him, the degrees of knowledge were elevated by him, and the squadrons of the Sacred Law [*Sharʿ*] were rendered victorious by him. A host of the scholars [*ʿulamāʾ*] became affiliated to him, a considerable number of the jurists [*fuqahāʾ*] studied under him, and countless spiritual paupers [*fuqarāʾ*], senior Shaikhs, and learned experts were invested by him with the tattered cloak [*khirqā*].

“A multitude of the Shaikhs of Yemen applied to him for investiture with the tattered cloak [*khirqā*], when the signs of his special merits reached them. Some of them received it directly from his hand, while most of them took it from a messenger whom he sent to them.

“As for his charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], they were innumerable. I have been informed, by the notable Imāms I have met, that his charismatic talents were demonstrated in uninterrupted succession, or almost without interruption. It is acknowledged, by common agreement, that his display of charismatic talents was unequaled by that of any other Shaikh in the entire world. I have alluded, in my concise poetic verses, to the celebrated beauties of his way of speaking, and to the extraordinary style in which he wove those qualities together, to produce a marvelous and unparalleled effect.”

(Here ends this abridged quotation from the book of Shaikh al-Yāfiʿi. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him!)

#### ☞ Author’s note: ☞

As for the place referred to by Shaikh al-Yāfiʿi (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) as al-Ḥalba an-Nūrāniyya [Luminous Arena], it is actually al-Ḥalba al-Barrāniyya [Suburban Arena], which al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥibb ad-Dīn ibn an-Najjār has mentioned in his *Taʾrīkh* [History]. After his biographical account [*tarjama*] of Shaikh ʿAbd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him), he states: “He convened the session of wise counsel [*majlis al-waʿẓ*] in al-Ḥalba al-Barrāniyya, in the month of Shawwāl of the year [A.H.] 521.” (Here ends the quotation from Ibn an-Najjār.)

It may be that al-Yāfi‘i deliberately modified it to “an-Nūrāniyya,” because of the illumination [*tanawwur*] that occurred there, when it became the location of the Shaikh’s session and his giving of wise counsel. It is also possible, however, that one of the copyists is responsible for the change in spelling. Allāh knows best!



## Eulogy of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir by Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn an-Nawawī (A.H. 631–676).

**T**he Shaikh of Islām, Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn an-Nawawī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), has this to say about Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in his book entitled *Bustān al-‘Ārifīn* [Orchard of Those Endowed with Direct Knowledge]:

“In all that has reached us, from trustworthy reporters, concerning the charismatic talents of the saints [*karāmāt al-awliyā’*], we learn of none more numerous than the charismatic talents of the Cardinal Pole [*Qutb*], the Shaikh of Baghdād, Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

“He was the Shaikh of the principal Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanbalī authorities in Baghdād. Leadership in the sphere of knowledge devolved upon him in his day and age. More than a few of the notable figures received their education in his fellowship, and most of the preeminent Shaikhs of ‘Irāq became affiliated to him. His teaching was propagated by a host of those endowed with splendid spiritual states. His countless students included many of the masters of exalted spiritual stations. The Shaikhs and scholars (may Allāh be well pleased with them all) were unanimous in declaring him worthy of the greatest honor and respect, in confirming his authority, in referring to his statements, and in having recourse to his judgment.

“Visitors flocked to him from every country and region, bringing votive offerings with them. Hopes were pinned on him from every direction. Followers of the spiritual path [*ahl as-sulūk*] came to him in haste from every deep ravine [*min kulli fajjīn ‘amīq*].<sup>279</sup>

“He was handsome in his attributes, noble in his traits of character, perfectly refined in his manners and his chivalry [*murū’a*], extremely

<sup>279</sup> See note 161 on p. 342 above.

humble, constantly cheerful, abundantly endowed with knowledge and intelligence, and strict in his adherence to the word of the Sacred Law [*Sharʿ*] and its rules. He treated the people of knowledge with profound respect, and honored those committed to the religion and the Sunna. He hated those addicted to heretical innovation [*bidʿa*] and passionate desires. He loved those who seek the Truth [*Ḥaqq*] with constant dedication to the sacred struggle [*mujāhada*] and unremitting vigilance [*murāqaba*] until death.

“He had an exalted way of speaking about the esoteric sciences [*ʿulūm al-maʿārif*]. His anger was intense whenever the sanctuaries of Allāh (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He) were violated. He was openhanded and magnanimous, in the most beautiful way. To put it in a nutshell, there was none like him in his day and age.

“May Allāh be well pleased with him!” (Here ends this abridged quotation.)



# An ode [*qaṣīda*] in honor of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, by al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr.

**T**he most excellent Qāḍī [Judge], Abū Bakr ibn al-Qāḍī Muwaffaq ad-Dīn Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm, widely known as Ibn ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Miṣrī, composed this poetic eulogy of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him and grant him contentment, and may He enable us to derive benefit from him):

Remembrance of God is the life of the heart of one who remembers,  
 so use it to kill the cunning wiles of the treacherous deceiver.

*dhikru ‘l-Ilāhi ḥayātu qalbi ‘dh-dhākiri  
 fa-amit bi-hi kaida ‘l-gharūri ‘l-ghādiri*

Remember Him and thank Him for His inspiration  
 of a man described as the grateful commemorator.

*wa ‘dhkur-hu wa ‘shkur-hu ‘alā ilhāmi-hi  
 dhakarani ‘nta ‘ata bi‘dh-dhakūri ‘sh-shākiri*

If you wish for nearness to the Lord of Majesty,  
 both inwardly and outwardly, you must dedicate your eulogy

*wa ‘j‘al madīḥa-ka in aradta taqarruban  
 min Dhi ‘l-Jalāli bi-bāṭinin wa bi-zāhirin*

to the Chosen [Prophet], his family and his Companions,  
 and to Shaikh Muḥyi ‘d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir,

*li‘l-Muṣṭafā wa li-‘ālī-hi wa Ṣiḥābi-hi  
 wa li‘sh-Shaikhi Muḥyi ‘d-Dīni ‘Abdi ‘l-Qādiri*

the sea of knowledge, the pious scholar, and the Cardinal Pole,  
 heir to the sainthood passed from noble ancestor to noble ancestor,

*baḥri ‘l-‘ulūmi ‘l-ḥibri wa ‘l-Quṭbi ‘lladhī  
 waratha ‘l-wilāyata kābiran ‘an kābirin*

the Shaikh of Shaikhs, their leader and their chief,  
 a kernel without a shell, a man of many glorious deeds,

*Shaikhi ‘sh-Shuyūkhi wa ṣadri-him wa imāmi-him  
 lubbin bi-lā qishrin kathīri ma‘āthira*

the Helper of humankind, their refreshing rain, and their protector,  
through his supplication, from every cruel misadventure,

*Ghawthi 'l-anāmi wa ghaithi-him wa mujīri-him  
bi-du'ā'i-hi min kulli khaṭṭbin jā'irīn*

Reality's crown and its glory, the star of guidance  
and its dawn, the light of murky darkness,

*tāji 'l-Ḥaqqīqati fakhri-hā najmi 'l-hidā-  
yati fajri-hā nūri 'z-ẓalāmi 'l-'ākiri*

the spirit of sainthood and its intimacy, the full moon of guidance  
and its sun, the splendid core of the quintessence,

*rūhi 'l-wilāyati unsi-hā badri 'l-hidā-  
yati shamsi-hā lubbi 'l-lubābi 'l-fākhiri*

the breast and the heart of the Sacred Law, the unique guide  
and *Qaṭb* of the Spiritual Path, the pure descendant of the Prophet

*ṣadri 'sh-Sharī'ati qalbi-hā fardī 't-Ṭarī-  
qati Qaṭbi-hā najli 'n-Nabiyyi 't-tāhiri*

and his proof at this time, the speaker whose heart  
addresses consciences and inner and outer beings,

*wa dalīli-hi 'l-waḡta 'l-mukhāṭibi qalbu-hu  
bi-sarā'ira wa bawāṭina wa zawāhira*

for he is the one who clarifies, the one who publicly reveals  
the mysteries of innermost beings and the secret of hearts and minds.

*wa huwa 'l-muqarrību wa 'l-mukāshifu jahratan  
bi-ghuyūbi asrārīn wa sirri ḍamā'ira*

He is the one who speaks, and whose speech is corroborated,  
and he is endowed with Revelations of the Unseen,  
the sign of someone powerful.

*wa huwa 'l-munṭiqu wa 'l-mu'ayyadu qawlu-hu  
wa la-hu Futūḡhu 'l-Ghaibi āyatu qādirīn*

He is blessed with love and affection and good pleasure  
from his Lord, through experiences like jewels.

*wa la-hu 't-taḡabbubu wa 't-tawaddudu wa 'r-riḍā  
min Rabbi-hi bi-ma'āriḡa ka-jawāhira*

My eulogy, however long, would be too limited in scope  
to give a full description of your ocean wide and deep.

*maḡhi 't-ṭawīlu muqassarūn bi-maḡīdi-hi  
'an waṣfi baḡri-ka bi'l-'aṡā'i 'l-wāḡfiri*

I have prepared for your love, after love of the Chosen One,  
the family and the Companions, the best of my treasure stores.

*a'dadu li-ḡubbi-ka ba'da ḡubbi 'l-Muṣṡafā  
wa 'l-ālī wa 'l-Aṣḡābi khaira dhakhā'irī*

I composed this eulogy of you for the sake of pleasing Allāh,  
not to obtain a diploma of recognition as a poet.

*wa ja'altu fi-ka 'l-madhā khaira wasīlatin  
li'llāhi lā li-ijāzatin ka-'sh-shā'iri*

Blessing, therefore, be upon the Chosen Prophet,  
the best of all human beings from first or last.

*thumma 'ṣ-ṣalātu 'ala 'n-Nabiyyi 'l-Muṣṭafā  
khaira 'l-warā min awwalin aw ākhirin*

All creatures, even the angels, are beneath him;  
there is none above him but the King All-Powerful.

*kullu 'l-khalā'iqi wa 'l-malā'iki dūna-hu  
mā fawq-hu ghairu 'l-Maliki 'l-Qādiri*

May Allāh bless him, as long as the darkness is dispelled  
by the gem of the brightly shining dawn.

*ṣallā 'alai-hi 'llāhu ma 'btasama 'd-dujā  
an jawhari 'ṣ-ṣubḥi 'l-munīri 's-sāfiri.*



## Conclusion

This brings us to the end of the material I have succeeded in compiling, from all that I have come to know about the charismatic exploits of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, the charismatic exploits of his offspring, and the charismatic exploits of the principal Shaikhs who extolled his merit. May Allāh be well pleased with him, and with them, on account of what the reader of this book will learn of their significance. The material is presented in summary form, since more than that would not have been feasible. It must be recognized that:

The bounty is in Allāh’s hand.  
*inna ’l-faḍla bi-yadi ’llāh:*

He bestows it on whom He will.  
*yu’ tī-hi man yashā’.*

And Allāh is the Owner of infinite bounty.  
*wa ’llāhu Dhū ’l-faḍli ’l-‘aẓīm. (3:73,74)*

It should also be recognized that none of the Shaikhs, and none of the masters of spiritual states, after his companions (may Allāh be well pleased with him), have been endowed with such an array of charismatic exploits [*manāqib*] and causes of commendation—in respect of knowledge and practice, high esteem and noble pedigree, special talents and gracious favors—as our master and our Shaikh, Shaikh Muḥyi ’d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

O Allāh, for the sake of his blessed grace, and because of the honor he enjoys in Your presence, grant us the truthfulness of certainty [*ṣidq al-yaqīn*]. Do not include us among those who consume this world at the cost of the religion. Include us among those who believe in the charismatic talents of the saints and the righteous [*karāmāt al-awliyā’ wa ’ṣ-ṣāliḥīn*].

I cherish the hope that the reader will kindly drape the hem of indulgence over any flaws contained in this work, and correct whatever slips have been made. For I compiled it in full awareness of my incompetence and inadequacy, compounded with bewilderment in the desert of perplexity, immersion in the oceans of loneliness, affliction with anxiety in the abode of exile, and paucity of proficiency in the craft.

I am begging Allāh (Exalted is He) to let me see my own faults clearly, to make my today better than my yesterday, to set the seal of goodness on the time of my personal departure, to make me thoroughly prepared to answer the interrogation in my grave, to include me among those on the right hand [*aṣḥāb al-yamīn*],<sup>280</sup> and to resurrect me under the banner of the Chieftain of the Messengers [*Sayyid al-Mursalīn*]. I beg Him to forgive me, my parents, my Shaikhs, my creditors, my brethren, all the Muslims, and those who read this book and pray for forgiveness, on my behalf as well as for themselves.

Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of all the worlds [*al-ḥamdu li'llāhi Rabbi 'l-ʿālamīn*]!

The compiler (may Allāh treat him kindly) is also the author of these poetic verses:

I compiled these accounts of charismatic exploits,  
and, O Allāh, my shoulders were heavily burdened!

*jamaʿtu mā fi-hi min manāqiba  
wa 'llāhumma qad uthqila 'l-manākib*

I beseech Allāh to grant me relief from my agony,  
in honor of those He endowed with special talents:

*arjū mina 'llāhi kashfa ḍurrī  
bi-jāhi man khaṣṣa bi'l-mawāhib*

[Meaning] the chosen and redeemed ash-Shāfiʿi,  
his ten companions, and their relatives.

*ash-Shāfiʿiyyi 'l-muṣṭafa 'l-mafḍiyyi  
wa ṣaḥbi-hi 'l-ʿashri wa 'l-aqārib.*

<sup>280</sup> This is an allusion to several verses [āyāt] of the Qurʾān, including:

And those on the right hand; what of those on the right hand?  
*wa aṣḥābu 'l-yamīn: mā aṣḥābu 'l-yamīn:*

[They will be in Paradise] amid thornless lote-trees....  
*fi sidrin makḥḍūd.* (56:27,28)

The compiler (may Allāh treat him kindly, and may He bestow His blessings upon him in the Two Abodes) can now say that the work is finished and completed. Praise be to Allāh, and to Him Alone. May Allāh bless our chieftain and our master, Muḥammad, and his family and his Companions, and may He always grant them much peace, until the Day of Judgment. May Allāh (Exalted is He) be well pleased with all the Companions.



## A postscript by Aḥmad Sa‘d ‘Alī, the editor-in-chief of the Egyptian publishing company.

**T**he following postscript has been added by the pauper in need of Him (Exalted is He), Aḥmad Sa‘d ‘Alī, the servant of knowledge and Chief of the Editorial Board of the Book-marketing and Printing Company of Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī and Sons, in Cairo, Egypt:

Praise be to the One who has caused the élite of His saints [*awliyā’*] to witness the beauty of His Majesty, who has let them taste the delightful drink of His intimate friendship, and who has absorbed them in the loftiness of His perfection, so that they see by it, hear by it, work by it, and walk by means of it.

We invoke blessing and peace upon the chieftain of those brought near, the best of all creatures, the greatest Messenger [*Rasūl*] and the most radiant seal, our master Muḥammad, and upon his righteous family, his worthy Companions, his sincerely devoted successors, and those who follow them in active goodness till the Day of Judgment [*Yawm ad-Dīn*].

It is fitting that praise of Allāh (Exalted is He) should mark the completion of the printing of the book entitled “Necklaces of Gems [*Qalā’id al-Jawāhir*], concerning the charismatic exploits of the Lordly Helper [*al-Ḡhawth ar-Rabbānī*], our master Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī,” by that excellent scholar and perfect source of information, Shaikh Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā at-Tādifi al-Ḥalabī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, and reward him with His good pleasure).

This book is a compilation of precious jewels, culled from the pearls of the charismatic exploits of the abovementioned Helper [*Ḡhawth*].

It also contains lessons of the utmost value, in the attention paid to the beacons of the Islāmic Community [*Umma*]. Its pages are adorned with the finery of their charismatic talents [*karāmāt*], and its spirit is perfumed with the mention of their situations and their finest sayings. Thus gold comes with the jewel, and incense with the fragrant musk.



# Appendix

Excerpts from  
Sufficient Provision for Seekers  
of the Path of Truth  
[*Al-Ghunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq*].

## End Matter

A selection of the Shaikh's wise words, exhorting  
and encouraging the reader to strive in the way of  
Allāh with the effort that is His due.

They impress upon you  
as a favor that they  
have embraced Islām.  
Say, "Count not your Islām  
as a favor upon me:  
Nay, Allāh has conferred  
a favor upon you  
that He has guided you  
to the faith, if you  
be true and sincere.  
Q. 49:17

### From:

Volume 1	The importance of good practices [ <i>ādāb</i> ]
Volume 5	Concerning goodness of moral character [ <i>ḥusn al-khulq</i> ]
Volume 5	Concerning thankfulness [ <i>shukr</i> ]
Volume 5	Concerning patience [ <i>ṣabr</i> ]
Volume 5	Concerning contentment [ <i>riḍā</i> ]
Volume 5	Concerning truthfulness [ <i>ṣidq</i> ]



**On how important it is for every believer to observe  
the good practices [*ādāb*] handed down to us  
from the Islamic sources.**

**I**t is most important that every believer [*mu'min*] should observe these good practices [*ādāb*] under all circumstances, and that he should never cease to observe them.

The Commander of the Believers, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be well pleased with him), is reported as having said: "Cultivate good behavior, then cultivate knowledge [*ta'addabū thumma ta'allamū*]."

Abū 'Abdī'llāh al-Balkhī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) once said: "Practice the refinement of knowledge, more often than the acquisition of knowledge."

'Abdu'llāh ibn al-Mubārak (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) once said: "When a man is described to me as one possessing all the knowledge of the ancients and the moderns, I feel no disappointment at having missed the chance to meet him. But when I hear tell of a man possessing personal refinement [*adab an-nafs*], I really look forward to meeting him, and I feel very disappointed if I miss the opportunity to do so."

The point may also be well stated by means of the following analogy: Faith [*īmān*] can be compared to a town defended by five citadels, the first of which is built of gold, the second of silver, the third of iron, the fourth of baked bricks [*ājurr*], and the fifth of unburnt sun-dried bricks [*libn*].<sup>1</sup> As long as the people responsible for guarding these citadels pay meticulous attention to the one last mentioned, meaning the one constructed of adobe material, the forces of the enemy cannot hope to seize control of any of the others. But if they neglect this particular citadel, the enemy forces will soon gain control of another, and then of a third, until all of the citadels are in ruins.

<sup>1</sup> The Spanish *adobe*, widely used in English as a convenient term for 'unburnt sun-dried brick,' is itself derived from *aṭ-ṭūba*, another Arabic word for 'the brick'!

Faith is defended in like manner by five citadels, the first of which is certitude [*yaqīn*], then sincerity [*ikhhlās*], then the correct performance of compulsory religious duties [*adā' al-farā'id*], then the fulfillment of all customary obligations [*itmām as-sunan*], and then the careful observance of good practices [*hifẓ al-ādāb*]. As long as the servant [of Allāh] continues to observe the practices that constitute refined behavior, and to cultivate them with meticulous care and attention, the devil [*shaiṭān*] cannot hope to find a weak spot in him. But if he neglects the refinement of behavior, the devil will soon make inroads into his other defences, undermining his fulfillment of customary obligations, then his performance of compulsory religious duties, then his sincerity, and then his certitude.

It is therefore most important for a person to observe the practices that constitute refinement in every aspect of his behavior, from the way he performs his ritual ablution [*wuḍū'*] and his ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], to the way he conducts the business of buying and selling, and in other matters besides these.

This brings us to the end of the concise treatment we chose to adopt and proposed to devote to the good practices recommended by the sacred law [*ādāb ash-sharī'a*].

By carrying out the commandment [of Allāh] in the five basic acts of worship [*'ibādāt*],<sup>2</sup> as described in the earlier chapters of this work, a person will come to be a Muslim. Then, by diligently cultivating these good practices, he will come to be a follower of the Sunna [of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace)] and one who treads in the footsteps of the Islamic tradition [*athar*]. He will thereby obtain a certain amount of direct knowledge [*ma'rifa*], although it still remains for him to discover the real experience [*ḥaqīqa*] of direct knowledge of the Creator [*Ṣāni'*].

Since this involves the workings of the spiritual core [*a' māl al-qalb*], we postponed discussion of the subject, in order to make it easy for him to take the initial step of entering our religion [*dīn*]. But once he has clothed himself outwardly with the light of Islām [*taqammasa bi-nūri'l-islāmi ṣāḥiran*], we shall say to him: "Now clothe yourself inwardly with the light of faith! [*taqammas bi-nūri'l-īmāni bāṭinan*]."

<sup>2</sup> These fundamentals of Islām, often called the 'Five Pillars,' are (1) the twofold declaration of faith [*shahādātān*], (2) the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], (3) the alms-due [*zakāt*], (4) the fast [*ṣawm*] during the month of Ramaḍān, and (5) the pilgrimage [*hajj*].

## 2. Concerning goodness of moral character [*ḥusn al-khulq*].

As for goodness of moral character [*ḥusn al-khulq*], the basic guidance on the subject is contained in the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), addressed to His Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in His Book, which was sent down and revealed to him:

And you are indeed  
of a splendid character. (68:4)

*wa inna-ka  
la-‘alā khuluqin ‘aẓīm.*<sup>3</sup>

There is also the traditional report, transmitted on the authority of Anas ibn Mālīk (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who said:

“Someone asked: ‘O Messenger of Allāh, which of the believers [*mu’minīn*] is the most excellent in faith [*īmān*]?’ To this he replied (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

“The best of them in moral character [*aḥsanu-hum khulqan*].”

Good moral character [*al-khulq al-ḥasan*] is the most excellent of all the virtues of the servant [of the Lord], and through it the essential natures [*jawāhir*] of men are made manifest. The human being is privately disguised by his physical constitution [*khalq*], and publicly revealed by his moral character [*khulq*].

To quote a wise saying on the subject:

“Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has distinguished His Prophet and His Messenger, Muḥammad, (Allāh bless him and give him peace), by endowing him with certain miracles [*mu’jizāt*], charismatic exploits [*karāmāt*],<sup>4</sup> and exceptional virtues [*faḍā’il*]. Yet He has not praised him for any of his special qualities, to the same extent as He has praised

<sup>3</sup> The forms [*khuluq*] and [*khulq*] are completely synonymous, both meaning “[moral] character, temper, nature; innate peculiarity; natural disposition.” While the form *khuluq* occurs in this verse [*āya*] of the Qur’ān, the shorter form *khulq* is probably more commonly used.

him for his moral character [*khulq*], for He has said (More Glorious is He than any other sayers):

And you are indeed of a splendid character. (68:4)	<i>wa inna-ka la-‘alā khuluqin ‘aẓīm.</i> ”
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Several explanations have been offered, including the following:

“When Allāh (Exalted is He) extolled him on account of his moral character [*khulq*], He did so because he behaved with noble generosity in both [the material and the spiritual] realms of being [*al-kawnain*], and because he was completely satisfied with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).”

“The character described as splendid [*al-khuluq al-‘aẓīm*] is that of someone who does not become involved in litigation, whether as plaintiff or defendant, because of his intense awareness [*ma‘rifā*] of Allāh (Exalted is He).”

“What it signifies is that he [who has a splendid character] is not affected by the rudeness of creatures [*khalq*], once he has become acquainted with the Truth [*Ḥaqq*].”

In the words of Abū Sa‘īd al-Kharrāz<sup>5</sup> (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him):

“It refers to the character of someone who has no aspiration [*himma*] other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).”

<sup>4</sup> The term *mu‘jiza* (plural: *mu‘jizāt*) is applied to a miracle performed by a Prophet [*Nabī*], and is distinguished from the *karāma* performed by a saint [*walī*] or righteous person [*ṣāliḥ*]. As defined by the Islāmic theologians, a *mu‘jiza* is “an event at variance with the usual course of nature, produced by one who lays claim to the office of a Prophet, in contending with those who refuse to acknowledge his claim, in such a manner as renders them unable to produce the like thereof.” (See: E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, art. ‘J–Z.) In a lengthy discussion of the miracles [*mu‘jizāt*] attributed to the Prophets (blessings and peace be upon them all), Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) has told us:

It is also universally believed by the people of Islām that the Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace) was granted as many miracles [*mu‘jizāt*] as those bestowed upon the rest of the Prophets, and more besides. Some of the experts in religious knowledge [*aḥl al-‘ilm*] have counted no fewer than a thousand such miracles. Included among them is the Qur’ān....

<sup>5</sup> Abū Sa‘īd Aḥmad ibn ‘Isā al-Kharrāz al-Baghdādī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was a cobbler by trade. He met Dhu ‘n Nūn al-Miṣrī, and became a companion of Bishr al-Ḥafī and Sarī as-Saqāṭī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon them). The author of several books, some of which have survived to this day, he is credited with having formulated the mystical doctrine of *fanā’* [becoming extinct to the realm of creation] and *baqā’* [existing in perpetuity in the presence of Allāh]. While the date of his death is uncertain, it probably occurred between A.H. 279/892 C.E. and A.H. 286/899 C.E. (See: A.J. Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966; pp. 218–20.)

It was al-Junaïd (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said: "I once heard al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī<sup>6</sup> say:

"We have lost three things: (1) good looks combined with chastity, (2) good speech combined with honesty, and (3) good brotherliness combined with loyalty."

In the words of one wise saying:

"Good moral character [*al-khulq al-ḥasan*] means attaching little importance to that which is withheld from you, and attaching great importance to that which is granted to you."

To quote another wise saying:

"The mark of goodness of moral character [*ḥusn al-khulq*] is the prevention of serious harm and the toleration of nuisances."

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) once said to his Companions (may Allāh be well pleased with them all):

You will never succeed in comforting people with your worldly possessions, so comfort them with cheerfulness of face and goodness of moral character [*ḥusn al-khulq*].



<sup>6</sup> Abū 'Abdi'llāh al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Baṣrī al-Muḥāsibī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) is generally regarded as one of the most outstanding figures in the history of Islāmic mysticism. Born in Baṣra in A.H. 165/781 C.E., he was still at an early age when he moved to Baghdād, where he studied the traditions of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), became an expert in Islāmic theology [*kalām*], and was closely involved with the leading personalities and prominent events of his times. He died in A.H. 243/857 C.E., but his teachings and writings continued to exert a profound and far-reaching influence, notably on the famous Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (the author of *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*). Many of al-Muḥāsibī's books and pamphlets have been preserved to this day.

### 3. Concerning thankfulness [*shukr*].

As for thankfulness [*shukr*], the basic guidance on the subject is contained in the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

If you are thankful,	<i>la-in shakartum</i>
I will surely give you more;	<i>la-azīdanna-kum</i>
but if you are ungrateful,	<i>wa la-in kafartum</i>
My punishment is terrible indeed.	<i>inna ‘adhābī la-shadīd.</i>
(14:7)	

This is reinforced by the traditional report, transmitted on the authority of ‘Aṭā’ (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), who said:

“I entered the presence of [the Prophet’s widow] ‘Ā’isha (may Allāh be well pleased with her), and said: ‘Tell us about the most amazing experience you ever had in the company of Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace).’ She wept at first, but then she said: ‘Was there anything at all about him that was not a marvelous wonder? He came to me one night, and snuggled up beside me in my bed [*firāshī*]<sup>7</sup> until his skin was touching my skin. But then he said: ‘O daughter of Abū Bakr, let me go, so that I may devote myself to the worship of my Lord.’

“She said: ‘So I told him: “I love your nearness, but I prefer to respect your dearest wish.” I therefore allowed him (Allāh bless him and give him peace) to take his leave of me. So he got up, found a skin container full of water, and performed his ritual ablution [*tawaḍḍa’ a*], pouring a considerable amount of water in the process. Then he stood erect, and started to perform the ritual prayer [*qāma fa-ṣallā*]. He wept as he did so, until his tears were streaming down onto his chest. Then he adopted the bowing posture [*raka’a*], and shed more tears. Then he prostrated himself [*sajada*], and again he wept. Then he raised his head, and wept still more. He went on like this (Allāh bless him and give him peace)

<sup>7</sup> At this point in the text, the reporter interjects: “or she may have said ‘*liḥāfi* [my bedspread].”

until Bilāl<sup>8</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him) arrived on the scene, and so he told him about the ritual prayer [ṣalāt].

“I then said: “O Messenger of Allāh, what causes you to weep, when Allāh has forgiven you your earlier and later sins?” To this he replied (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

““Should I not be a thankful servant [*‘abd shakūr*]? Why should I not do it, since Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has sent down to me the words of revelation:

Surely in the creation of the heavens  
and the earth, and the alternation  
of night and day,  
and the ship that runs upon the sea  
with that which is of use  
to human beings, and the water  
which Allāh sends down  
from the sky, thereby reviving  
the earth after its death,  
and dispersing all kinds  
of beasts therein,  
and the distribution of the winds,  
and the clouds set in orderly array  
between heaven and earth—  
surely there are signs for people  
who can understand. (2:164) ””

*inna fī khalqī ‘s-samāwāti  
wa ‘l-arḍi wa ‘khtilāfī ‘l-laili  
wa ‘n-nahāri  
wa ‘l-fulki ‘llatī tajrī  
fī ‘l-baḥri bi-mā yanfa‘u ‘n-nāsa  
wa mā anzala ‘llāhu  
mina ‘s-samā‘i min mā ‘in  
fa-aḥyā bi-hi ‘l-arḍa  
ba‘da mawti-hā wa baththa  
fī-hā min  
kullī dābba:  
wa taṣṭifī ‘r-riyāḥi  
wa ‘s-saḥābi ‘l-musakhkhari  
baina ‘s-samā‘i wa ‘l-arḍi  
la āyātīn li-qawmin  
ya‘qilūn.*

According to those who specialize in ascertaining the actual facts [*ahl at-taḥqīq*], the true nature of thankfulness [*ḥaḳīqat ash-shukr*] is the acknowledgment of the benefaction of the benefactor [*nī‘ mat al-mun‘im*], with an attitude of humility. In accordance with this meaning, Allāh (Exalted is He) has described Himself as being the Most Thankful One [*ash-Shakūr*] in the widest sense, that is to say, in the sense that He rewards His servants for their thankfulness. For the recompense of thankfulness [*jazā‘ ash-shukr*] is also called thankfulness [*shukr*], just as Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And the recompense of an evil  
is an evil just like it. (42:40)

*wa jazā‘u sayyi‘ atin  
sayyi‘ atun mithlu-hā.*

It has also been said that the true nature of thankfulness [*ḥaḳīqat ash-shukr*] is the act of praising the beneficent person [*muḥsin*] by

<sup>8</sup> Bilāl al-Ḥabashī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was the first muezzin [*mu‘adhḥin*] appointed by the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) to summon the Muslim community to the five daily prayers. He was an Abyssinian slave who had been ransomed by Abū Bakr (may Allāh be well pleased with him).

mentioning his beneficence [*iḥsān*]. The servant's thankfulness [*shukr*] to Allāh (Exalted is He) is therefore expressed through the praise he offers to Him, by mentioning His beneficence [*iḥsān*] toward His servant. As for the thankfulness [*shukr*] of the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him) toward His servant, it is expressed through the praise He confers upon him, by making it known that he has acted beneficently for His sake. Furthermore, the beneficence [*iḥsān*] of the servant represents his worshipful obedience to Allāh, while the beneficence [*iḥsān*] of the Lord of Truth (Glory be to Him) represents His bestowal of gracious favor [*in'ām*] upon His servant. When the thankfulness [*shukr*] of the servant is genuine, it is not only a matter of utterance by the tongue, but also the heart's acknowledgment of the Lord's bestowal of gracious favor [*in'ām ar-Rabb*].

Moreover, thankfulness [*shukr*] can be subdivided into several categories, namely:

1. Thankfulness expressed by the tongue [*shukr bi'l-lisān*]. This constitutes the acknowledgment of the benefaction [*ni'ma*] with an attitude of humble acceptance [*istikāna*].
2. Thankfulness expressed by the body and the limbs [*shukr bi'l-badan wa 'l-arkān*]. This is the characteristic indication of loyalty and readiness to serve [*al-wafā' wa 'l-khidma*].
3. Thankfulness expressed by the inner feeling [*shukr bi'l-qalb*]. This requires a careful balance between the visible display of appreciation and the constant preservation of a sense of reverence.

It has also been said that thankfulness of the eyes [*shukr al-'ainain*] means that you overlook any fault you notice in your companion, while thankfulness of the ears [*shukr al-udhunain*] means that you ignore any fault you hear him accused of possessing.

In the simplest terms, thankfulness [*shukr*] means that you do not disobey Allāh (Exalted is He) by misusing His gracious favors.

Here is another saying that clearly deserves to be quoted:

"Thankfulness [*shukr*] may mean the thankfulness of the learned scholars [*shukr al-'ālimīn*], in which case it will be among the subjects they discuss.

"Thankfulness [*shukr*] may mean the thankfulness of the dedicated worshippers [*shukr al-'ābidīn*], in which case it will be a feature of their actions.

“Thankfulness [*shukr*] may mean the thankfulness of those who know by direct intuition [*shukr al-‘ārifīn*], in which case it will be expressed through their honest devotion to Him (Almighty and Glorious is He) in all their states and conditions. It will be expressed through their firm conviction that whatever is good in their experience, and whatever is manifested from them in the way of worshipful obedience, servitude, and remembrance of Him (Almighty and Glorious is He), is entirely due to His enabling guidance [*tawfiq*], His gracious favor, His help, His power and His strength (Almighty and Glorious is He). It will be expressed through their detachment from all of that, and their total absorption [*fanā’*] in Him. It will be expressed through their acknowledgment of their own inability, deficiency and ignorance, and then through their humble submission to Him (Almighty and Glorious is He) in all conditions and circumstances.”

It was Abū Bakr al-Warrāq (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Thankfulness for a gracious favor [*shukr an-ni‘ma*] means feasting one’s eyes on the gift received, while preserving a sense of reverence.”

As someone else once put it:

“Thankfulness for a gracious favor [*shukr an-ni‘ma*] means that you regard yourself as no more deserving of it than a parasite [*tufailī*].”

It was Abū ‘Uthmān [al-Ḥīrī]<sup>9</sup> (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Thankfulness [*shukr*] is the conscious awareness [*ma‘rifa*] of the fact that you are quite incapable of thankfulness.”

Let us also consider the following wise sayings:

“Thankfulness for thankfulness [*ash-shukr ‘ala ’sh-shukr*] is more complete than simple thankfulness [*shukr*]. This means that you regard your thankfulness as the result of His enablement [*tawfiq*], and you have received that enablement on account of the gracious favors bestowed upon you, so you give thanks to Him for the thankfulness He has

<sup>9</sup> Abū ‘Uthmān Sa‘īd ibn Ismā‘īl al-Ḥīrī [or, al-Ḥairī], known as al-Wā‘iz [the Preacher] (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), was one of the early Shaikhs of Khurāsān. Along with Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣṣār an-Nisābūrī and Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Amr ibn Salma al-Ḥaddād an-Nisābūrī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon them), he came to be regarded as one of the three founding fathers of the Malāmātī movement. He visited al-Junaid (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) in Baghdād, and died at Nishapūr in A.H. 298/911 C.E. “Even in the days of my childhood,” he once said, “my heart was always seeking after something of reality. I was always convinced...that the Islāmic way of life held mysteries other than its external manifestations.”

enabled you to experience. Then you thank Him for the thankfulness-upon-thankfulness [*shukr ash-shukr*], and so on ad infinitum.”

“Thankfulness [*shukr*] is the attribution of blessings to their Master [*Mawlā*], with an attitude of humble submission to Him.”

It was al-Junaid (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Thankfulness [*shukr*] means that you do not look upon yourself as worthy of the gracious favor you have received.”

In several wise sayings, the meaning of the simple adjective *shākir* [thankful; grateful] is contrasted with the significance of the intensive form *shakūr* [very thankful; most grateful; extremely appreciative]. For instance:

“The person who is simply thankful [*shākir*] is someone who gives thanks for what is available [*mawjūd*], while the person who is very thankful [*shakūr*] is someone who gives thanks for what is unavailable [*mafqūd*].”

“The person who is simply thankful [*shākir*] is someone who gives thanks for the provision of benefit [*naḥʿ*], while the person who is very thankful [*shakūr*] is someone who gives thanks for the withholding of benefit [*manʿ*].”

“The person who is simply thankful [*shākir*] is someone who gives thanks for the granting of gifts [*ʿaṭāʾ*], while the person who is very thankful [*shakūr*] is someone who gives thanks for trial and tribulation [*balāʾ*].”

“The person who is simply thankful [*shākir*] is someone who gives thanks in response to immediate delivery [*badhl*], while the person who is very thankful [*shakūr*] is someone who gives thanks when delivery is subject to deferment [*maṭl*].”

It was [Abū Bakr ibn Jaḥdar] ash-Shiblī<sup>10</sup> (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Thankfulness [*shukr*] means focusing attention on the source of the benefit [*munʿim*], not focusing attention on the benefit [*niʿma*] itself.”

<sup>10</sup> Abū Bakr ibn Jaḥdar ash-Shiblī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was of Khurāsānian origin, although born in Baghdād or Samarra. The son of a court official, he rose through the ranks of the imperial service. While in Baghdād for the occasion of his investiture as Governor of Demavend, he experienced conversion. He joined the circle of al-Junaid (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), played a leading part in the stormy history of al-Ḥallāj (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him), and was committed to an asylum on account of his eccentric behavior. He died in A.H. 334/946 C.E. at the age of 87. (See: A.J. Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966; pp. 277-86.)

Someone else had this to say on the subject:

“Thankfulness [*shukr*] means firmly securing the bonds of that which has been found [*qaid al-mawjūd*], and then hunting for that which is still missing [*ṣaid al-mafqūd*].”

It was Abū ‘Uthmān [al-Ḥīrī] (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“The thankfulness of the common folk [*shukr al-‘amma*] is for food and drink and clothing, while the thankfulness of the élite [*shukr al-khawāṣṣ*] is for the spiritual values [*ma‘ānī*] conferred upon their hearts.”

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has told us:

And few of My servants	<i>wa qalīlun min</i>
are very thankful. (34:13)	<i>‘ibādiya ‘sh-shakūr.</i>

[The Prophet] David (peace be upon him) once said:

“My God [*Ilāhī*], how can I thank You, when my thankfulness to You [*shukrī la-ka*] is itself a blessing from among Your gracious favors [*nī‘ma min nī‘ami-ka*]?”

So Allāh (Blessed and Exalted is He) conveyed to him by way of inspiration [*awḥā ilai-h*]: “Now you have thanked Me indeed! [*al-āna qad shakarta-nī*].”

To quote another wise saying:

“If your hand is too short to extend remuneration, let your tongue dwell at length on the expression of thanks [*shukr*].”

When Idrīs (peace be upon him) was given the good tidings of forgiveness, he is said to have asked for life. “Why?” he was asked, so he explained: “So that I may be able to thank Him, for I was previously working for forgiveness.” The angel thereupon spread its wing, and carried him up to heaven.

It is said that one of the Prophets [*Anbiyā’*] (peace be upon them all) once passed by a small stone, from which a large amount of water was gushing forth. He was astonished at the sight, but Allāh caused the stone to let him know that it could speak, so he asked it about its condition. It told him: “Ever since I heard Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) speak of:

a Fire of which	<i>nāran waqūdu-ha ‘n-nāsu</i>
the fuel is men and stones. (66:6)	<i>wa ‘l-ḥijāratu.</i>

—I have been weeping from fear of it.” So that Prophet (peace be upon him) offered a prayer of supplication, pleading with Him to grant that stone asylum from the Fire. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) thereupon conveyed to him by way of inspiration [*awhā ilai-h*]: “I have already granted it asylum from the Fire.” That Prophet then continued on his way. When he returned later on, he found that the water was still gushing from the stone, but even more copiously than on his previous visit. He was bewildered, but Allāh (Exalted is He) again caused the stone to let him know that it could speak, so he said to it: “Why are you still weeping, when Allāh has already forgiven you?” The stone explained: “That was the weeping of sorrow and fear, but this is the weeping of thankfulness [*shukr*] and joy.”

In the words of another wise saying:

“One who is thankful [*shākir*] is in the presence of superabundance [*mazīd*], because he is going through the experience of receiving gracious favor [*ni‘ma*], for Allāh (Exalted is He) has told us:

If you are thankful,	<i>la-in shakartum</i>
I will surely give you more. (14:7)	<i>la-aʿẓidanna-kum</i>

“And one who is patient [*ṣābir*] is in the presence of Allāh, taking shelter with Him (Exalted is He), because he is going through the experience of suffering trial and tribulation [*balāʾ*]. Allāh (Exalted is He) has told us:

Surely Allāh is with	<i>inna ʾllāha</i>
those who are patient. (2:153)”	<i>maʿa ʾṣ-ṣābirīn</i>

“Praise [*ḥamd*],” it has been said, “is for the very breaths we breathe, while thankfulness [*shukr*] is for the blessings of the senses.”

In the words of the authentic tradition [*al-khabar aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ*]:

The first of those invited to enter the Garden of Paradise will be those who are constantly praising Allāh [*al-ḥammādūna liʾllāh*].

“Praise [*ḥamd*],” it has also been said, “is for what He has prevented, while thankfulness [*shukr*] is for what He has brought into being.”

The following story was told by one of the righteous:

“In the course of one of my journeys, I caught sight of an old man, who was far advanced in age, so I asked him about his condition. He responded by telling me: ‘In the early part of my life, I was deeply in love

with a cousin of mine, the daughter of my paternal uncle, and she was equally in love with me, so it was agreed that I should marry her. [When she entered my chamber] on the night of her bridal procession [*zifāf*], I said to her: ‘Come, let us spend the whole of this night in worship, as a way of giving thanks to Allāh [*shukran li’ llāh*] (Almighty and Glorious is He) for having brought us together.’ So we performed the ritual prayer [*ṣallainā*] throughout that night, and neither of us paid any attention to the other. Then, when the second night came around, we spent the whole of it in similar fashion. This came to be our constant practice, so that now, after seventy or eighty years have gone by, we are still in that same state every night.’ His wife was with him at the time, so he turned to her and asked her: ‘Is that not just the way it is, O so-and-so?’ To this the old woman replied: ‘It is just as the old man told you.’”



#### 4. Concerning patience [*ṣabr*].

As for patience [*ṣabr*], the basic guidance on the subject is contained in the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

<p>O you who believe, endure with patience, outdo all others in patient endurance, be ready, and observe your duty to Allāh, in order that you may succeed. (3:200)</p>	<p><i>yā ayyuha 'lladhīna</i> <i>āmanu 'ṣbirū</i> <i>wa ṣābirū</i> <i>wa rābiṭū:</i> <i>wa 'ttaqu 'llāha</i> <i>la' alla-kum tuflīhūn.</i></p>
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—and in His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

<p>And endure patiently [O Muḥammad]. Your endurance is only by [the help of] Allāh. (16:127)</p>	<p><i>wa 'ṣbir</i> <i>wa mā ṣabru-ka</i> <i>illā bi'llāhi.</i></p>
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—as well as in the following traditional reports:

According to 'Ā'isha (may Allāh be well pleased with her), the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) once said:

Patience ought to be exercised at the first shock [*inna aṣ-ṣabra*  
*'inda 'ṣ-ṣadmati'l-ūlā*].<sup>11</sup>

It is reported that a man once said: “O Messenger of Allāh, my property has gone and my body has become sick.” So the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) told him:

There is no good in a servant [of the Lord] whose property does not depart, and whose body does not get sick. Whenever Allāh (Exalted is He) loves a servant of His, He is sure to put him to the test, and when He puts him to the test, He admonishes him to be patient.

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is also reported as having said:

In the progress of a man's development in the sight of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), there is a stage that he cannot reach by means of his own work.

<sup>11</sup> In commenting on the use of the word *ṣadma* [shock; assault, attack], as it occurs in this saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), the classical Arabic lexicographers observe that “patience is usually the last thing to be exercised in a case of misfortune, but it is most commended on the occasion of the sharpness or vehemence thereof.” (See: E.W.Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, art. Ṣ—D—M.)

He must first suffer the pain of affliction in his physical body, for that is the only means by which he can reach it.

According to one traditional account [*khabar*], when the words of Allāh (Blessed and Exalted is He):

And he who does something wrong	<i>wa man ya'mil sū'an</i>
will have the recompense thereof.	<i>yujza bi-hi.</i>
(4:123)	

—were sent down, Abū Bakr, the Champion of Truth [*aṣ-Ṣiddiq*] (may Allāh be well pleased with him), said: “O Messenger of Allāh, how can there be any hope of salvation [*ḥalāl*], now that this Qur'ānic verse [*āya*] has been revealed?” So the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) told him:

Allāh has forgiven you, O Abū Bakr. Do you not get sick? Does painful affliction not befall you? Do you not endure with patience? Do you not experience grief and sorrow? Well, these are the things for which you will be recompensed.

That is to say: “Every affliction that befalls you will be an atonement [*kaffāra*] for your sins.”

There are actually three kinds of patience [*ṣabr*], namely:

1. Patience for the sake of Allāh [*ṣabr li'llāh*] (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is the kind of patience [*ṣabr*] that is exercised in the course of carrying out His commandments and respectfully observing His prohibitions.

2. Patience in bearing with Allāh [*ṣabr ma'a'llāh*] (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is the kind of patience [*ṣabr*] that is exercised while undergoing the effects of His decree and His actions within you, which cause you to experience all kinds of hardships and adversities.

3. Patience in anticipation of Allāh [*ṣabr 'ala'llāh*] (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is the kind of patience [*ṣabr*] that is exercised while waiting for that which He has promised, in the way of sustenance, joyful relief, sufficiency, triumphant success, and reward in the abode of the Hereafter.

It has also been said that patience [*ṣabr*] can be divided into two types, namely:

1. Patience [*ṣabr*] exercised in situations where there is an active rôle [*kasb*] for the servant [of the Lord] to play.

2. Patience [*ṣabr*] exercised in situations where he has no active rôle [*kasb*] to play.

In the case of patience [*ṣabr*] exercised in situations where he does have an active rôle [*kaṣb*] to play, there is a further twofold subdivision, namely:

1a. [Patience exercised] in performing that which Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has commanded him to do.

1b. [Patience exercised] in avoiding that which Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has forbidden him to do.

As for patience [*ṣabr*] exercised in situations where there is no active rôle [*kaṣb*] for the servant [of the Lord] to play, this refers to his patient endurance of the suffering he must undergo on account of the judgment of Allāh and His decree, in the form of trouble and pain experienced in both the inner feeling and the physical body.

It has been said that those who are called patient [*ṣābirūn*] are actually of three types, namely: (1) someone who tries to be patient [*mutaṣabbir*]; (2) someone who is simply patient [*ṣābir*]; and (3) someone who is very patient indeed [*ṣabūr*].

A man once came to see what he could learn from ash-Shiblī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), so he said to him:

“What kind of patience [*ṣabr*] is hardest on those who are patient [*ṣābirīn*]?”

“Patience in relation to Allāh [*aṣ-ṣabr fi ’llāh*].”

“No.”

“Patience for the sake of Allāh [*aṣ-ṣabr li’ llāh*].”

“No.”

“Patience in bearing with Allāh [*aṣ-ṣabr ma’a ’llāh*].”

“No.”

“Well then, what is it?”

“Patience in enduring separation from Allāh [*aṣ-ṣabr ‘ani ’llāh*].” At this point, ash-Shiblī gave vent to such a plaintive cry that his spirit was almost destroyed.

It was al-Junaid (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“The journey from this world to the Hereafter is a trivial distance of six cubits for the believer [*mu’min*] to travel. The exodus from the realm of creation [*khalq*] in the direction of the Lord of Truth [*Ḥaqq*] is difficult to accomplish. The journey from the self [*nafs*] toward Allāh is

extremely hard. But patience with Allāh [*aṣ-ṣabr ma‘a ‘llāh*] is even more difficult.”

Someone asked him (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) to explain the meaning of patience [*ṣabr*], so he said: “It is the swallowing of a bitter draught without displaying a frown or a scowl.”

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be well pleased with him) once said: “Patience [*ṣabr*] in relation to faith [*īmān*] is in the position of the head in relation to the body.”<sup>12</sup>

It was Dhu ‘n-Nūn al-Miṣrī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Patience [*ṣabr*] means refraining from acts of noncompliance, remaining calm when swallowing the lumps that form in the throat as a reaction to misfortune, and demonstrating spiritual affluence despite the advent of poverty in the sphere of material livelihood.”

The following sayings also deserve to be quoted:

“Patience [*ṣabr*] means coping with misfortune by remaining on your best behavior.”

“It means being wiped out by misfortune [*balwā*] without showing any sign of complaint [*shakwā*].”

“Patience [*ṣabr*] means keeping a healthy attitude in the presence of adversity, no less than in the presence of well-being.”

“The most excellent recompense for worshipful service [*‘ibāda*] is the recompense for patience [*ṣabr*]. Allāh (Exalted is He) has told us:

And We shall surely pay those  
who were patient their wage,  
according to the best  
of what they did. (16:96)

*wa la-najziyanna ‘lladhīna  
ṣabarū ajra-hum  
bi-aḥsani  
ma kānū ya‘malūn.*

—and He has also told us (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Surely the patient  
will be paid their wages  
in full without reckoning.  
(39:10) ”

*innamā yuwaffa ‘ṣ-  
ṣābirūna ajra-hum  
bi-ghairi ḥisāb.*

“Patience [*ṣabr*] means remaining steadfast in loyal obedience to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and accepting the agonies of His affliction with a broad and expansive feeling.”

<sup>12</sup> **Author’s note:** According to some authorities, this saying has been attributed to the Prophet himself (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

It was al-Khawwās (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Patience [*ṣabr*] means remaining steadfast in loyal obedience to Allāh (Exalted is He), in accordance with the statutes [*aḥkām*] of the Book and the Sunna.”

Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘ādh ar-Rāzī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) once said:

“The patience of the lovers [of the Lord] [*ṣabr al-muḥibbīn*] is much harder than the patience of the ascetics [*ṣabr az-ẓāhidīn*]. How astonishing it is, that they can be patient at all!”

He then waxed poetic, as he declared [in Arabic verse]:

“Patience is bearable in all other contexts,  
but with You it is unbearable.”

Let us also consider the following sayings:

“Patience [*ṣabr*] means giving up complaining”.

“It means humble submission [*istikāna*] and seeking refuge [*isti‘ādha*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).”

“It means seeking help [*isti‘āna*] from Allāh.”

“The basic noun *ṣabr* [patience] means that no distinction is made between the state of grace [*ni‘ma*] and the ordeal of tribulation [*miḥna*], and that both are experienced with equanimity [*sukūn al-khāṭir*]. The derived form *taṣabbur* [trying to be patient] means calmness in coping with misfortune, although the feelings are affected by the burdens of the ordeal.”



## 5. Concerning contentment [*riḍā*].

As for contentment [*riḍā*], the fundamental guidance on the subject is contained in the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Allāh is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. (58:22)	<i>raḍiya 'llāhu 'an-hum</i> <i>wa raḍū 'an-h.</i>
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—and in His words (Blessed and Exalted is He):

Their Lord gives them good tidings of mercy from Him, and good pleasure, and Gardens [of Paradise] in which they shall have lasting bliss. (9:21)	<i>yubashshiru-hum Rabbu-hum</i> <i>bi-rahmatin min-hu wa riḍwānin</i> <i>wa jannātin la-hum</i> <i>fī-hā na'imun muqīm.</i>
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Furthermore, according to a traditional report, transmitted on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be well pleased with him and with his father), Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) once said:

The full flavor of true faith [*īmān*] is tasted by one who is content with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) as a Lord [*Rabb*].

[The Caliph] 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb once wrote to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī<sup>13</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with them both):

“The point I wish to emphasize is this: All goodness resides in contentment [*riḍā*], so if you are capable of being content, [well and good]. If not, you must be patient [*fa-'sbir*].”

It was Qatāda<sup>14</sup> (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him)

<sup>13</sup> Abū Mūsā 'Abdu'llāh ibn Qais ibn Sulaimān al-Ash'arī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was a loyal Companion of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). He served as a general in many of the battles fought in the early days of Islām. In A.H. 37, he was appointed as an arbitrator to represent 'Alī (may Allāh ennoble his countenance) at the Battle of Ṣiffīn. He was also a distinguished scholar in the field of Qur'ānic studies. He died ca. A.H. 42.

<sup>14</sup> Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb Qatāda ibn Di'āma ibn Qatāda as-Sadūsī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was learned in Qur'ānic exegesis [*tafsīr*] and Islamic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], as well as being an authority on Arabic poetry. He died in A.H. 118.

who said, in commenting on the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

And if one of them receives tidings of the birth of a female, his face remains darkened, and he is inwardly furious. (16:58)	<i>wa idhā bushshira aḥadu-hum bi'l-unthā ḡalla wajhu-hu muswaddan wa huwa kaẓīm.</i>
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—“This describes the attitude of those Arabs who attribute partners to Allāh [*mushrikā* 'l-'Arab]. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has thus informed us of the badness of their attitude. As for the believer [*mu'min*], he is worthily disposed to be content with whatever Allāh (Exalted is He) has allotted to him.”

The judgment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is better than a man's judgment on his own behalf. That which Allāh has decreed for you concerning something you dislike, O son of Adam, may be even better for you than that which Allāh has decreed for you concerning something you like. You must therefore observe your duty to Allāh (Exalted is He), and be content to accept His decision.

Allāh (Blessed and Exalted is He) has told us:

But it may happen that you hate a thing that is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing which is bad for you. Allāh knows, and you know not. (2:216)	<i>wa 'asā an takrahū shai'ān wa huwa khairun la-kum: wa 'asā an tu'ibbū shai' an wa huwa sharrun la-kum: wa 'llāhu ya'lamu wa antum lā ta'lamūn.</i>
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That is to say, [He knows, and you do not know] what is in the best interest of your religion [*dīn*] and your worldly life, for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has kept concealed from His creatures the things that are to their advantage. He has charged them with servitude [*'ubūdiyya*] to Him, by requiring fulfillment of the commandments and observance of the prohibitions [of the Sacred Law], submissive resignation to that which is foreordained [*maqḍūr*], and contentment [*riḍā*] with the divine decree [*qaḍā'*] in every respect, whether it be in their favor or to their disadvantage. He has appropriated the consequences and the benefits unto Himself exclusively (Almighty and Glorious is He). It is therefore necessary for the servant to be constantly engaged in worshipful obedience to his Master [*Mawlā*], to be content with whatever Allāh has allotted to him, and to harbor no doubts about Him.

As you should also be well aware, the amount of trouble experienced by any individual creature is in proportion to his quarrel with destiny [*qadar*] over that which is foreordained [*maqdūr*], his compliance with his own desire [*hawā'*], and his lack of contentment [*riḍā*] with the divine decree [*qaḍā'*]. Whenever someone is content to accept the divine decree, that person can enjoy rest and relaxation. Whenever someone is not content with it, on the other hand, his experience of misery and trouble can only be prolonged, and he will still obtain nothing from this world except that which has been allotted to him. As long as his personal desire persists in making its demands upon him, he cannot be content to accept the divine decree, because that desire is in contention with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and so his troubles can only intensify and multiply.

The procurement of ease and comfort is the result of opposition to personal desire [*hawā'*], because it is bound to involve contentment [*riḍā*] with the divine decree [*qaḍā'*]. The procurement of trouble and discomfort, on the other hand, is the result of compliance with personal desire, because it is bound to involve contention with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). So may desire not be there, and if it is, let us not be!

Should contentment [*riḍā*] be classed as one of the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*], or as one of the spiritual stations [*maqāmāt*]? On this point there are differences of opinion among the qualified scholars and experts in the spiritual path [*ṭarīqa*].

According to the people of 'Irāq, it is one of the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*]. It is not subject, they maintain, to active acquisition [*kasb*] by the servant [of the Lord]. It is rather an occurrence or visitation [*nāẓila*], a condition that settles for a while within the inner feeling, like all the other spiritual states [*aḥwāl*], then changes and passes away, as another state arrives to take its place.

According to the Khurāsānīs, on the other hand, contentment [*riḍā*] is one of the spiritual stations [*maqāmāt*]. They consider it to be the final stage of absolute trust in the Lord [*tawakkul*], so that it represents the ultimate degree to which the servant [of the Lord] can attain through his own acquisitive capacity [*iktisāb*].

It is possible to reconcile these two views, by stating the case as follows:

The initial stage of contentment [*bidāyat ar-riḍā*] is subject to active acquisition [*muktasaba*] by the servant [of the Lord], which means that it is one of the spiritual stations [*maqāmāt*]. But its final stage [*niḥāya*] is one of the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*], which means that it is not subject to active acquisition.

In simple terms, someone who is content [*rāḍī*] is someone who does not object to the foreordainment [*taqḍīr*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

It was Abū ‘Alī ad-Daqqāq<sup>15</sup> (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Contentment [*riḍā*] does not mean that you are not affected by the experience of trial and tribulation. Contentment [*riḍā*] simply means that you do not object to the divine decision [*ḥukm*] and decree [*qaḍā’*].”

The wise elders [*mashāyikh*] (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon them) have often said:

“Contentment with the divine decree [*ar-riḍā bi’l-qaḍā’*] is Allāh’s most splendid gateway, and it is this world’s Garden of Paradise. That is to say, when someone is blessed with the honor of contentment [*riḍā*], he has already received the most abundant welcome, and has been honored with the most exalted nearness.”

It is said that a pupil [*tilmīdh*] once asked his teacher [*ustādh*]: “Is the servant aware that Allāh (Blessed and Exalted is He) is well pleased with him?” “No,” replied the teacher, “how can he know that, when His good pleasure [*riḍā*] is imperceptible?” But the pupil said: “Oh yes, he does recognize it,” so the teacher asked: “How?” The pupil then explained: “When I find that my inner feeling is well pleased with Allāh (Exalted is He), I know that He is well pleased with me.” So the teacher said: “You have done very well, young man!”

It is indeed true that the servant will not be well pleased with Allāh, unless the Lord of Truth (Glorious is His Majesty) is well pleased with him. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has told us:

Allāh is well pleased with them,	<i>raḍiya ‘llāhu ‘an-hum</i>
and they are pleased with Him.	<i>wa raḍū ‘an-h.</i>
(58:22)	

<sup>15</sup> Abū ‘Alī ad-Daqqāq (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was the founder of a spiritual center in Nīshāpūr, called Khānaqāh-i Sarāwī. He died in A.H. 405/1014 C.E. One of his pupils, Abū Sa‘īd ibn Abī ‘l-Khair of Maihana in Khurāsān, was a man of great saintliness who met and corresponded with the master-philosopher Avicenna [Ibn Sīnā]. Another was Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Qushairī, the author of an important and frequently quoted treatise entitled *ar-Risālat al-Qushairiyya*.

—That is to say, because of His good pleasure [*riḍā*] with them, they are well pleased with Him.

It is said that Moses [*Mūsā*] (peace be upon him) once had a request to make of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he said: “My God [*Ilāhī*], point out to me a deed, such that, if I perform it, You will be well pleased with me.” The Lord said: “You are not capable of that,” so Moses (peace be upon him) sank to the ground, prostrating himself [*sājid*] in humble submission. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) then conveyed to him by way of inspiration [*awḥā ilai-hi*]: “O son of ‘Imrān, My good pleasure resides in your contentment with My decree [*inna riḍā’ī fī riḍā-ka bi-qaḍā’ī*].”

Let us also consider the following wise sayings:

“If a person wishes to arrive at the stage of contentment [*riḍā*], let him stick to the course upon which Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has conferred His good pleasure [*riḍā*].”

“Contentment [*riḍā*] is of two kinds, namely: (1) ready approval of Him [*riḍā bi-hi*], and (2) resigned acceptance of Him [*riḍā ‘an-hu*]. There is ready approval of Him as a Manager [*Mudabbir*], and there is resigned acceptance of Him with respect to what He decrees as a Ruler [*Hākim*] and as a Judge [*Fāṣil*].”

“When someone is content [*rāḍī*], it means that even if Hell [*Jahannam*] were to be placed on his right side, he would not ask for it to be moved over to his left side.”

“Contentment [*riḍā*] means the expulsion of disagreeable feelings from the heart, so that nothing remains except happiness and joy.”

Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyya (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon her) was once asked the question: “When is the servant [of the Lord] content [*rāḍī*] with the divine decree [*bi-’l-qaḍā’*]?” To this she replied (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon her): “When he is happy with affliction, just as he is happy with gracious favor.”

It is said that ash-Shiblī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) once uttered the expression:

There is neither any power  
nor any strength  
except with Allāh.

*lā ḥawla  
wa lā quwwata  
illā bi’ llāh.*

—in the presence of al-Junaïd (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him), so al-Junaïd (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) told him: “In saying that, you are prompted by a feeling of annoyance, and the feeling of annoyance is due to the lack of contentment [*riḍā*] with the divine decree [*qaḍāʾ*].”

It was Abū Sulaimān [ad-Dārānī]<sup>16</sup> (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“Contentment [*riḍā*] means that you do not ask Allāh to grant you the Garden of Paradise, and that you do not appeal to Him for refuge from the Fire of Hell.”

Dhu ’n-Nūn al-Miṣrī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) once said:

“These are three of the symptoms of contentment [*riḍā*]: (1) the lack of personal preference in advance of the divine decree [*qaḍāʾ*], (2) the absence of bitterness in the wake of the divine decree, and (3) the arousal of love in the midst of trial and tribulation.”

He also said (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him):

“It is the happiness of the heart with the bitterness of the divine decree [*qaḍāʾ*].”

When Abū ’Uthmān [al-Ḥīrī] (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) was asked to explain the saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

What I ask of you is contentment [*riḍā*] in the wake of the divine decree [*qaḍāʾ*].

—he said: “That is because contentment [*riḍā*] in advance of the divine decree [*qaḍāʾ*] is only the prior determination to be content, while contentment [*riḍā*] in the wake of the divine decree [*qaḍāʾ*] is the actual experience of contentment [*huwa ’r-riḍā*].”

As we learn from a traditional report, someone once told al-Ḥusain ibn ’Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib<sup>17</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him and with

<sup>16</sup> Abū Sulaimān ’Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Aḥmad ibn ’Aṭīyya ad-Dārānī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) was a pious devotee whose inclination lay toward extreme asceticism. He is renowned for his many memorable sayings. He died in A.H. 205 or 215.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Ḥusain ibn ’Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be well pleased with him and with his father) was the grandson of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

his father) that Abū Dharr<sup>18</sup> (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to say:

“Poverty is dearer to me than affluence, sickness is dearer to me than health, and death is dearer to me than life.”

So he said: “May Allāh bestow His mercy upon Abū Dharr. As for myself, I say: ‘When someone relies upon the excellence of Allāh’s choice, he does not wish for anything other than that which Allāh has chosen for him.’”

[Abū ‘Alī] al-Fuḍail ibn ‘Iyād<sup>19</sup> once said to Bishr al-Ḥāfi [“the Barefoot”] (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon them both):

“Contentment [*riḍā*] is more meritorious than abstinence [*zuhd*] from this world, because when someone is content [*rāḍī*], he does not wish for anything above his actual situation.”

The view expressed by al-Fuḍail is the correct one, because it refers to contentment with one’s actual condition [*ar-riḍā bi’l-ḥāl*], and all that is good resides in contentment with one’s actual condition. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) said to Moses [*Mūsā*] (peace be upon him):

“O Moses! I have  
preferred you above mankind by My  
messages and by My speaking [to you].  
So hold that which I have given you,  
and be among the thankful.” (7:144)

*yā Mūsā  
inni ‘ṣṭafaitu-ka ‘ala ‘n-nāsi  
bi-risālātī wa bi-kalāmī  
fa-khudh mā ātaitu-ka  
wa kun mina ‘sh-shākiriṇ.*

That is to say: “Be content with that which I have bestowed upon you. Do not go looking for another situation, and be among the

<sup>18</sup> Abū Dharr Jundab ibn Junādat al-Ghifārī (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was among the earliest to embrace Islām, and he came to be one of the most distinguished of all the Companions of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). Noted for his humility and abstinence, he was so eager to acquire knowledge that he is said to have matched even Ibn Mas‘ūd (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in religious learning. Together with Abū ‘d-Dardā’ and Abū ‘Abdi’llāh Ḥudhaifa ibn al-Yamān al-‘Abasī (may Allāh be well pleased with them both), he was one of those Companions who were called *ṣāhib sirr an-Nabī*, because of the secret knowledge imparted to them by the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). He died in A.H. 31 or 32.

<sup>19</sup> Abū ‘Alī al-Fuḍail ibn ‘Iyād at-Tālaqānī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) died in Mecca in A.H. 187/803 C.E. Born in Khurāsān, he is said to have been a highwayman at the beginning of his career. After his conversion he went to Kūfa, where he studied under Sufyān ath-Thawrī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him) and achieved considerable repute as an authority on the Traditions of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). He is famous for his bold preaching before the Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashīd, who called him “the Prince of the Muslims.” It is said that when he died sorrow disappeared from the world.

thankful.” In other words: “Be content with making the most of your actual condition [*ḥifẓ al-ḥāl*].”

Likewise to our own Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace), He said (Exalted is He):

And strain not your eyes toward that	<i>wa lā tamuddanna ‘aina-ka</i>
which We have given	<i>ilā mā matta‘nā bi-hi</i>
for some pairs among them to enjoy—	<i>azwājan min-hum</i>
the flower of this world’s life, that	<i>zahrata ‘l-ḥayāti ‘d-dunyā</i>
We may thereby put them to the test.	<i>li-naftina-hum fī-h.</i>

(20:131)

As well as giving this instruction to His Prophet (blessing and peace be upon him), He also commanded him to make the most of his actual condition [*ḥifẓ al-ḥāl*], and to be content with the divine decree and bestowal of provision [*ar-riḍā bi’l-qaḍā’ wa ‘l-‘aṭā’*], in His words (Exalted is He):

And the provision of your Lord	<i>wa rizqu Rabbi-ka</i>
is better and more lasting. (20:131)	<i>khairun wa abqā.</i>

That is to say: “That which We have bestowed upon you—in the way of Prophethood [*Nubuwwa*], knowledge [*‘ilm*], satisfaction [*qanā‘a*], patience [*ṣabr*], authority in religion [*wilāyat ad-dīn*] and the rôle of exemplar [*quḍwa*] therein—is far superior to that which We have bestowed upon anyone other than you.”

All goodness therefore resides in making the most of one’s actual condition [*ḥifẓ al-ḥāl*], in being content with it, and in refraining from taking an interest in any condition apart from it, because the only possibilities, as far as that [other condition] is concerned, are the following: (1) it is your own allotted portion [*qism*], (2) it is the allotted portion [*qism*] of someone other than yourself, or (3) it is not a portion [*qism*] allotted to anyone, but something that Allāh (Exalted is He) has caused to exist as a temptation [*fitna*].

If it is indeed your own allotted portion [*qism*], it is bound to come your way, whether you wish for it or not. It is therefore inappropriate for you to exhibit bad manners and greediness in its pursuit, for that would be judged unworthy by the standard of reason [*‘aql*] and knowledge [*‘ilm*].

If it is the allotted portion [*qism*] of someone other than yourself, you must not waste your time and energy on that which you cannot obtain, and which will never come your way.

If it is not a portion [*qism*] allotted to anyone, but merely a temptation [*fitna*], how could any intelligent person be content, and how could any sensible person consider it worthwhile, to seek and attempt to procure a temptation for himself?

Certain experts on the subject have said:

“Contentment [*riḍā*] with the divine decree [*qadāʾ*] means that there is no significant distinction, as far as you are concerned, between what you like and what you dislike about His decree (Almighty and Glorious is He).”

One of them has said:

“It means patience [*ṣabr*] in enduring the bitterness of the divine decree [*qadāʾ*].”

Another has said:

“It means laying the palms of one’s hands on the ground [i.e., prostrating oneself] in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and submitting [*taslīm*] to His rulings [*aḥkām*].”

Another has said:

“It means leaving it to the Manager [*Mudabbir*] to select the best option.”

Yet another has said:

“It means giving up personal preference [*ikhtiyār*].”

One of them has said:

“The people who really experience contentment [*ahl ar-riḍā*] are those who eradicate personal preference from their hearts. This means that they accord no special preference to any of the various things they may want for themselves, nor to any of the things by which they intend to please Allāh. They make no requests of Him, and they do not try to find out about a ruling [*ḥukm*] before it comes down [from Him]. So, when a ruling [*ḥukm*] does come down from Allāh, inasmuch as they are not eagerly awaiting it, and have not tried to learn about it in advance, they are content with it and take pleasure and delight in it.”

The same person has also said:

“Allāh has some servants who see it as a gracious favor, bestowed upon them by Allāh, when the sentence [*ḥukm*] of trial and tribulation is imposed upon them, so they thank Him for it and accept it gladly. But then they come to realize, in the wake of their delight in gracious favors,

that their preoccupation with the benefaction [*ni‘ma*], instead of with the Benefactor [*Mun‘im*], amounts to a shortcoming. Their hearts are now preoccupied with the Benefactor [*Mun‘im*], instead of with the benefaction [*ni‘ma*], and so the affliction runs its course over them, while their hearts are unaffected by it.

“Once they have settled into this spiritual station [*maqām*], and have made it their permanent residence, their Master [*Mawlā*] will transport them to a level that is even loftier for them and more elevated than that, because there is no limit and no end to His gifts (Almighty and Glorious is He).”

At the very least, contentment [*riḍā*] must mean that one ceases to yearn for anything apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), since Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has declared it blameworthy to yearn for anything other than Him (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Yaḥyā ibn Kathīr is reported as having said: “I read the Torah [*Tawrah*], and in it I saw that Allāh (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He) says:

‘Accursed is he whose reliance is placed upon a creature like himself.’”

In one of the traditions [*akhbār*], it is reported that Allāh (Glory be to Him) says:

By My Might, My Majesty, My Generosity and My Glory, I shall cut off with despair the hope of anyone who pins his hope on anything other than Me. I shall cause him to wear the garment of shame among the people. I shall banish him from My proximity, and I shall cut him off from access to Me. Will he go on pinning his hope, in the midst of adversities, on anything other than Me, when adversities are under My control, and I am the Ever-Living [*al-Ḥayy*]? Will he go on appealing to others apart from Me? Will he go on knocking with his mind at the doors of others apart from Me, when they are locked and their keys are in My hand?

In another tradition [*khabar*], it is reported that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) says:

Whenever a servant holds fast to Me, rather than to My creation, that fact becomes known from his heart and his intention [*niyya*], so the heavens and the earth and all within them conspire to bring about his downfall, but I provide him with a means of escape therefrom. And whenever a servant clings to a created entity, rather than to Me, I cut away the cords of heaven from above him, and I turn the earth into a swamp beneath his feet. Then I bring him to ruination in this world, and I make him suffer misery therein.

One of the Companions [*Ṣaḥāba*] (may the good pleasure [*riḍwān*] of Allāh the Exalted be upon them all) is reported as having said: "I once heard Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) say:

"If someone takes pride in human beings, he deserves to be treated with contempt."

In the words of another wise saying:

"If a person relies upon a creature like himself, he deserves to be treated with contempt. Because of his ambitious desire [*tama'*] to get whatever he wants, he is prevented from consulting his inner feeling, distracted from his true aspiration, and exposed to degradation and abasement. Two things are therefore stacked against him, namely, humiliation in this world and remoteness from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), without the addition of one single atom to increase his sustenance."

One of the experts had this to say:

"I know of nothing more harmful to spiritual aspirants [*murīdīn*] and seekers [*tālibīn*] than ambitious desire [*tama'*]. I know of nothing more detrimental to their hearts, nothing more likely to make them suffer degradation, nothing more injurious to their inner feelings, nothing more likely to keep them far removed from their goal, and nothing more serious as a distraction from their true aspiration.

"As for why this is so, the reason is simply that it amounts to a form of polytheism [*shirk*], wherever they may be, because one of them has attributed a partner to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), inasmuch as he has focused his ambitious desire [*tama'*] on a creature like himself, who is powerless to cause any harm or provide any benefit, and incapable of giving or withholding any gift. He has thereby assigned the power of the King [*Malik*] to His slave [*mamlūk*]. So what of his claim to piety [*wara'*]? His claim to piety will not be recognized as genuine, until he attributes all things to their Owner [*Mālik*] (Almighty and Glorious is He), then seeks to obtain them from Him, and does not seek to obtain them from anyone other than Him."

As someone else has explained:

"Ambitious desire [*tama'*] has a root and a branch. The root of it is heedless neglect, while its branch consists of hypocritical ostentation [*riyā'*], promoting an undeserved reputation [*sum'a*], pretense and affectation, and a fondness for acquiring prestige in the eyes of the public."

Jesus [‘*Īsā*] (peace be upon him) once said to the Disciples [*Hawāriyyīn*]: “Ambitious desire [*tamaʿ*] is the deadly enemy of inspiration [*wahy*].”

One of the experts on this subject is reported as having said:

“It happened one day that I felt a strong desire for something belonging to this world, but then an invisible voice [*hātif*] called out to me, saying: ‘O you there! Since the free man with spiritual aspirations [*al-ḥurr al-murīd*] can find whatever he seeks in the presence of Allāh, it ill befits him to depend in his heart upon servile creatures [‘*abīd*].’”

You should also know that Allāh has certain servants [‘*ibād*] who are unconscious of the fact that ambition must be focused on the One who has the power to grant what they desire, until they receive the blessing of grace [*baraka*] from an unexpected source. Only then do they realize that the state of ambitious desire [*tamaʿ*] is a defective condition among the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*]. It is a lower degree than all the degrees attained by those, among the people of absolute trust in the Lord, whose knowledge is based on direct experience [*al-ʿārifīn min ahl at-tawakkul*].

No trace of ambitious desire [*tamaʿ*] can enter and settle in the heart of the spiritual aspirant [*murīd*], unless it be on account of total remoteness from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), due to his having focused his ambition on a creature like himself, and because fear has not deterred him from doing so, even though he is well aware that his Master [*Mawlā*] knows absolutely everything about him.



## 6. Concerning truthfulness [*ṣidq*].

As for truthfulness [*ṣidq*], the basic guidance on the subject is contained in the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

O you who believe, be careful	<i>yā ayyuha 'lladhīna</i>
of your duty to Allāh,	<i>āmanu 'ttaqu 'llāha</i>
and be with the truthful. (9:119)	<i>wa kūnū ma'a 'ṣ-ṣādiqīn.</i>

—and in the traditional report, transmitted on the authority of ‘Abdu’llāh ibn Mas‘ūd (may Allāh be well pleased with him), who stated that the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) once said:

When the servant [of the Lord] never ceases to tell the truth, and makes truthfulness [*ṣidq*] his constant pursuit, he is eventually recorded in the sight of Allāh as a champion of truth [*ṣiddīq*]. But when he never ceases to tell lies, and makes falsehood [*kidhb*] his constant pursuit, he is eventually recorded in the sight of Allāh as a professional liar [*kadhdhāb*].

It is said that Allāh told David (peace be upon him), by way of inspiration:

O David, if someone confirms the truth of My word [*ṣaddaqa-nī*] in the privacy of his conscience [*ṣarīra*], I will confirm the truth of his word [*ṣaddaqtu-hu*] in the opinion of the creatures in his public life.

You must know and understand that truthfulness [*ṣidq*] is the mainstay of the business [*‘imād al-amr*], the means by which it is brought to completion [*tamām*], and by which it is kept in good order [*niẓām*]. It ranks second only to Prophethood [*Nubuwwa*], as we know from the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

And whoever obeys Allāh	<i>wa man yuṭī‘i 'llāha</i>
and the Messenger, they are in	<i>wa 'r-rasūla fa-ulā'ika</i>
the company of those	<i>ma'a 'lladhīna an'amta 'alai-him</i>
to whom Allāh has granted	<i>mina 'n-nabiyyīna</i>
gracious favor—the Prophets,	<i>wa 'ṣ-ṣiddīqīna wa 'sh-shuhadā'i</i>
the champions of truth, the martyrs	<i>wa 'ṣ-ṣāliḥīn:</i>
and the righteous—and the best	<i>wa ḥasuna ulā'ika</i>
of company are they!" (4:69)	<i>rafiqā.</i>

The word *ṣādiq* [truthful] is the simple adjective corresponding to the noun *ṣidq* [truthfulness], while the term *ṣiddiq* [champion of truth] is a more intensive form. The *ṣiddiq* is someone who makes such a constant practice of *ṣidq*, that it comes to be his regular habit and his natural disposition, and truthfulness [*ṣidq*] becomes the predominant aspect of his character.

Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] means that no distinction is made between what is believed in private and what is professed in public. The person who is simply truthful [*ṣādiq*] is therefore someone who tells the truth in his verbal statements [*ṣadaqa fi aqwāli-hi*], while the champion of truth [*ṣiddiq*] is someone who tells the truth not only in his verbal statements, but also in all his actions and states of being [*ṣadaqa fi aqwāli-hi wa jamī‘i af‘āli-hi wa aḥwāli-hi*].

In the words of one the wise:

“If anyone wishes for Allāh to be with him, he had better make truthfulness [*ṣidq*] his constant practice, for Allāh is with those who are truthful [*fa-inna ‘llāha ma‘a ‘ṣ-ṣādiqīn*].”

It was al-Junaid (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“The truthful person [*ṣādiq*] experiences spiritual transformation [*yanqalibu*] forty times a day, while the hypocrite [*murā‘ī*] remains stuck in one and the same state of being for forty years.”

Let us also consider the following wise sayings:

“Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] means speaking the truth [*al-qawl bi’l-ḥaqq*], even in situations of grave danger.”

“Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] means ensuring the mutual consistency of private belief and public statement.”

“Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] means keeping that which is unlawful [*ḥarām*] from lodging in the corner of one’s mouth.”

“Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] means putting one’s loyal commitment to Allāh into active practice.”

Sahl ibn ‘Abdi’llāh [at-Tustarī] (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) once said:

“The fragrant aroma of truthfulness [*ṣidq*] cannot be detected in the presence of someone who applies the oil of hypocritical flattery [*dāhim*] to himself or to other people.”

It was Abū Saʿīd al-Qurashī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“The truthful person [*ṣādiq*] is someone who is fully prepared to die, and who would not be embarrassed by any secret of his, if it happened to be disclosed. Allāh (Exalted is He) has said:

Then long for death,  
if you are truthful folk! (2:94)<sup>20</sup>

*fa-tamannawu 'l-mawta*  
*in kuntum ṣādiqīn.*

These sayings also deserve to be quoted:

“Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] means genuineness in the affirmation of Divine Unity [*ṣiḥḥat at-tawḥīd*], together with the sense of purpose [*qaṣd*].”

“The real meaning of truthfulness [*ḥaqīqat aṣ-ṣidq*] is that you would always tell the truth, even in a situation of deadly peril, from which nothing but lying could save you.”

“Three things are never lacking in the truthful person [*ṣādiq*], namely: (1) graceful charm [*ḥalāwa*], (2) dignity [*ḥaiba*], and (3) a lively sense of humor [*malāḥa*].”

Dhu'n-Nūn al-Miṣrī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) once said:

“Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] is the sword of Allāh; it cuts through anything upon which it is brought to bear.”

It was Sahl ibn ʿAbdīllāh [at-Tustarī]<sup>42</sup> (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) who said:

“The principal offense of the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqīn*] is the one they commit by conversing only with their fellows.”<sup>21</sup>

Faṭḥ al-Mawṣilī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) was once asked to explain the meaning of truthfulness [*ṣidq*]. By way of response, he stuck his hand into the blacksmith's brazier, pulled out a piece of iron, which was being heated in the fire, and placed it on the palm of his hand until it cooled. “This,” he said, “is truthfulness [*ṣidq*].”

When someone asked al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him) to describe the distinguishing mark of truthfulness [*ṣidq*], he said:

<sup>20</sup> These words of Allāh (Exalted is He) occur in Q. 2:94 and 62:6.

<sup>21</sup> This saying calls to mind the English idiom: “preaching to the converted.”

“The truthful person [*ṣādiq*] is someone who would not mind, because of the goodness of his own heart, if every one of his faculties moved out into the hearts of his fellow creatures. He does not like other people to notice all the minute details of his good work, but he does not object to their noticing what he does badly. If he did object to that, it would indicate that he would like them to regard him with excessive admiration, and this is not in keeping with the moral standards of the champions of truth [*akhlāq aṣ-ṣiddīqīn*].”

One of the wise once said: “If someone does not perform the permanent religious duty [*al-farḍ ad-dā'im*], his performance of the temporary religious duty [*al-farḍ al-mu'aqqat*] will not be accepted of him.” When asked to explain what he meant by the permanent religious duty, he said: “Truthfulness [*ṣidq*].”

Let us give the last word to the wise man who said:

“If you seek Allāh by means of truthfulness [*ṣidq*], He will give you a looking glass, a mirror in which you will see every detail of the marvels and wonders of this world and the Hereafter.”



## About the Translator

Muhtar Holland was born in 1935, in the ancient city of Durham in the North East of England. This statement may be considered anachronistic, however, since he did not bear the name Muhtar until 1969, when he was moved—by powerful experiences in the *latihan kejiwaan* of Subud—to embrace the religion of Islām.\*

At the age of four, according to an entry in his father's diary, he said to a man who asked his name: "I'm a stranger to myself." During his years at school, he was drawn most strongly to the study of languages, which seemed to offer signposts to guide the stranger on his "Journey Home," apart from their practical usefulness to one who loved to spend his vacations traveling—at first on a bicycle—through foreign lands. Serious courses in Latin, Greek, French, Spanish and Danish, with additional smatterings of Anglo-Saxon, Italian, German and Dutch. Travels in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. Then a State Scholarship and up to Balliol College, Oxford, for a degree course centered on the study of Arabic and Turkish. Travels in Turkey and Syria. Then National Service in the Royal Navy, with most of the two years spent on an intensive course in the Russian language.

In the years since graduation from Oxford and Her Majesty's Senior Service, Mr. Holland has held academic posts at the University of Toronto, Canada; at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, England (with a five-month leave to study Islamic Law in Cairo, Egypt); and at the Universiti Kebangsaan in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (followed by a six-month sojourn in Indonesia). He also worked as Senior Research Fellow at the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, England, and as Director of the Nūr al-Islām Translation Center in Valley Cottage, New York.

\* The name Muhtar was received at that time from Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, of Wisma Subud, Jakarta, in response to a request for a suitable Muslim name. In strict academic transliteration from the Arabic, the spelling would be *Mukhtār*. The form *Mughtar* is probably more common in Indonesia than *Muhtar*, which happens to coincide with the modern Turkish spelling of the name.

His freelance activities have mostly been devoted to writing and translating in various parts of the world, including Scotland and California. He made his Pilgrimage [*Hajj*] to Mecca in 1980.

**Published works include the following:**

Al-Ghazālī. *On the Duties of Brotherhood*. Translated from the Classical Arabic by Muhtar Holland. London: Latimer New Dimensions, 1975. New York: Overlook Press, 1977. Repr. 1980 and 1993.

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